St. Mark's Library
of the
General Theological
Seminary

Chelsea Square · New York

Maryland Diocesan Library
The Memorial Library
of the Reverend Edwin A. Dalrymple.
Whittingham Collection

Maryland Diocesan Library

LENDING DEPARTMENT

GIFT OF MRS. CHARLES O. SCULL. 708 Pres

NOV 14 1928

No. 5626

SAINT PAUL AND THE ANTE-NICENE CHURCH

PROF. ADOLF HARNACK'S

THE APOSTLES' CREED

Translated by
THE REV. STEWART MEANS, A.M., B.D.

From an article in the Third Edition of
Herzog's "Realencyclopädie"

Revised and Edited by
THOMAS BAILEY SAUNDERS

Crown 8vo, cloth, price 1s. 6d. net

SAINT PAUL AND THE ANTE-NICENE CHURCH

An Unwritten Chapter of Church History

BY

REV. STEWART MEANS, A.M., B.D.

RECTOR OF ST JOHN'S CHURCH, NEW HAVEN, CONN.

LONDON
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
1903

BT
25
.M4
1903

MARYLAND DIOCESAN
LIBRARY

To

CHARLES McBURNEY, M.D.

OF NEW YORK

THE GREAT SURGEON, THE KIND FRIEND,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED

IN DEEP AND EVERLASTING GRATITUDE

BY THE AUTHOR

PREFACE

A WORD to the few readers into whose hands this volume may come, may not be amiss. It is not a history of the Christian Church through the first two centuries, but simply what it purports to be, a chapter out of that history. Neither does it deal with the many contrasts between the Christianity of the New Testament and that of the following centuries, but only with the type of piety or the Christian character as set forth by St. Paul, and as it presents itself in the next centuries.

This contrast in the minds of young and earnest students of church history excites surprise, and is a source, oftentimes, of much confusion and perplexity. It is to bring this problem to the full light, describe it, and, if possible, give some explanation as to its causes, that this work was written. The task was also undertaken with the hope that some one better qualified than the present writer might engage in a more thorough and exhaustive investigation of this most interesting phase in the history of the Early Church.

No monograph exists in our language on this

subject, and so far as I am able to learn, there is none either in French or German. The subject is treated in almost every study of any of the Fathers or writers of the Early Church, but no summary has been made of the results that lie scattered through so many volumes. The writer does not claim any originality for the contents of this work, but has simply endeavoured to collect and arrange the material in a way that will bring out its full weight and value.

The interest which prompted this examination was neither controversial nor critical, but purely religious, although the writer has endeavoured to avail himself of all that the best critical authorities had to offer, and has striven to write in as dispassionate a manner as his own temperament will permit.

The work has been carried on amid the exacting demands of an active parish and the busy life of a modern clergyman. This is not offered in excuse for the innumerable defects which every scholar will recognize at a glance; the statement is made in explanation, not extenuation. I was not compelled to write.

It was not deemed best to overload the pages with too many footnotes, but some of the chief authorities have been referred to, and also those least accessible to the general reader.

An honest man always feels a special gratification in paying his debts; but those of the present writer are so many and so large, that he can express his

obligations only to a few of the many to whom thanks are due.

It is a peculiar pleasure to me to have an opportunity to publicly express what I have felt for nearly twenty years—my debt to the officers of Yale University Library. Had it not been for the almost endless kindness and unfailing courtesy with which I was not only permitted, but assisted, to use this great collection, neither this work nor any other which I have undertaken could have been accomplished.

Among the various works which have been of chief assistance in these studies, the *Dogmengeschichte* of the brilliant and acute Professor of Church History in the Royal University of Berlin comes first. Almost every student of the present day recognizes how much he owes to Professor Harnack, and I among the many. Anyone at all familiar with this great work will recognize the influence of his thought and method on many pages where no acknowledgment is made.

The "Apostolic Fathers" of the late Bishop of Durham was one of the books most constantly in use, and always referred to on any matter connected with the second century of the Church. Almost everything of value on that period seems to be included in those five solid volumes. Nowhere, at least in English, is there anything to compare with them in thoroughness and completeness in the scholarship of the last century.

The standard works in English, and many of the

general histories in German, have been examined, but most of them were so entirely familiar to the average student, that it would savour of pedantry to refer to them, as well as being entirely unnecessary.

While this work was in preparation, I had hoped on its publication to make acknowledgment of a debt greater than any words of mine can measure; but the ear for which they were intended is now deaf. It has pleased God to take him to Himself before these pages shall see the light. To the Rev. Edwin Harwood, D.D., late Rector of Trinity Church, New Haven, is due all that is best in this or anything else that I have done. He taught me to study in a scientific spirit, and to strive to think with a mind open on all sides to the truth. My mind has been but the sand to take the impress of his massive intelligence. That glowing intellect is shining in another life now, and its light has gone out for me. He dreamed great dreams and high, and never lost hope, though the drift of life and thought seemed to run counter to his convictions: he dreamed of a nobler humanity, of a loftier Christian character. It is with this dream, this hope, this faith, that this book was written: when they have come, both book and writer can well be forgotten.

STEWART MEANS.

St. John's Rectory,
New Haven, Conn., U.S.A.,
Easter, 1903.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

St. Paul, ... 1

CHAPTER II

The Apostolic Fathers and Justin Martyr, ... 64

CHAPTER III

Irenæus and the Catholic Church, ... 123

CHAPTER IV

The Alexandrines, Clement, and Origen, ... 203

CHAPTER V

Tertullian and the Foundation of Latin Christianity, . 281

SAINT PAUL AND THE ANTE-NICENE CHURCH

CHAPTER I

ST. PAUL

Such a title as that adopted for this volume is likely to recall to the older students of church history the fierce struggle with the Tübingen School and the, to some, ill-omened name of Baur. To younger men it may appear as an unfortunate attempt to revive controversies long since ended, and which should no longer occupy the attention of scholars. Especially might this appear the case, since the most brilliant scholar in Europe, in the field of church history, has warned us against the aims and the methods of the School of Baur.

The present writer has, however, a far less ambitious and, he trusts, more practical object in view than to revive old controversies. His aim is to present, as clearly and as briefly as he can, some of the main features of St. Paul's conception of the new life and the new ideal for man revealed in

Christ, and to determine what, if any, relation exists between these fundamental ideas of the Apostle and the forms of thought and practical aims of the later Christian Church.

The peculiar position occupied by St. Paul in the history of Christian thought and life is such as to make the attempt worth at least the attention of serious students of church history.

The prevalent assumption, which gives such authority to the writings of the early Christian centuries, that the ideas and practices there set forth are a natural, logical, and genetic development of the primary conceptions and original aims of the first Christian teachers, is one which cannot be accepted by any careful student of the Apostolic Age. Moreover, in no way can this fallacy be more clearly exposed than in the contrast in thought and purpose of the great Apostle to the Gentiles with the manifest tendencies of the later writers of the Church.

Among all the preachers of the Gospel of the Apostolic Age none occupies the same position as that of St. Paul. He alone has given us the fullest account of the way the Gospel appealed to him, the effect it had upon him, and the results which it produced, not only upon his actual life, but upon that body of vital thought which directs conduct and shapes the spiritual energy by which a new ideal of life can be realized. He stands almost by himself in his manifestation of intellectual activity. His position in the Apostolic Church was indeed unique

in this respect, and we find in him the life of the past living more actively than even in those whom we are wont to call the Jewish-Christian Apostles. As a result of this, or by means of it, he became the first Christian theologian. For theology is the result of reflection, the application of human thought to the problems which the spiritual life of man in the light of the Revelation of Jesus Christ reveals, and thought is the one process in which the past in all its subtle differences and vital energies makes itself felt. Jesus Christ left no system of dogma or doctrine unfolded or developed for the mind to grasp. His Person was the centre of the whole spiritual activity of His disciples, and so the first Christian theologian stood on his own feet. He had to form for himself a conception of the process by means of which man comes into a right relation with Christ, while among the older Apostles this right relation shaped itself gradually and unconsciously without especial reflection upon their part. He had to analyze his own spiritual experience, to form a foundation upon which he could stand, and gather out of his own life in contact with Christ just those particular forms of activity in which the influence of Christ was revealed, and so point the way by means of which the object of the Gospel could be attained. In real life it is one of the commonest of all experiences that men shall seek the same ideal, but seek it by such misleading paths that it never can be attained. More than that, the ability to see and the power to describe the path by

which that ideal is attained are given but to few. These are the spiritual geniuses of the race, and in the effort to learn the way in the midst of the confusions and uncertainties of the present, we often find ourselves looking backwards to discover what the great leaders of the past can give us for the practical difficulties of the present.

"What St. Paul, a man so separated from us by time, training, race, and circumstances, really thought we cannot make sure of knowing exactly,"[1] is a warning which must always be borne in mind. The embarrassment also of deciding whether he found the ideas which he expressed already in existence, or whether he evolved them through his own Christian speculation, is one which cannot in every case be overcome. A great man is not the result of the influences or intellectual forces of his age alone, nor, on the other hand, is he independent of them. As a rule, none are so sensitive to them as they who seem to rise above and beyond the very spiritual conditions which surround them, and which, nevertheless, on closer examination are seen to move them powerfully. The exceptional position which St. Paul occupied, and the difficulty of even incompletely apprehending his character and aim in their various elements and fulness, can be recognized in the singular and rather striking external features of his life.

"A Hebrew of the Hebrews," he was born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, of which Strabo says:

[1] Arnold, *St. Paul and Protestantism*, p. 23.

"The inhabitants of this city have so great a zeal for philosophy as well as for the circle of all science, that they rival indeed Athens and Alexandria, as well as every other place in which schools of learning and philosophy are found."[1] It was a stronghold of Stoicism, and perhaps some traces of this influence may be found. In all probability he received his elementary education under these influences, yet there are scant traces of it—a few fragmentary references to philosophical terms, and a quotation or two which might easily have been the result of his general intercourse with cultivated Greeks, this is all. In this respect he offers a very striking contrast to his contemporary Philo, upon whom the influences of Greek thought and culture worked most powerfully. A nature which could resist so successfully the influences of the intellectual life around him must have had an original inclination, which would have more determination in affecting his career than any mere circumstances of education. And so it seems to have been. Drawn by the passionate instinct of his race to the great City, his intense national pride was deepened by the education which he there received. The patriotic and national tendencies worked in all the higher channels of Jewish life and thought, and the education given in the great schools of Jerusalem was exclusively Jewish and Rabbinical. He sat at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the teachers who most fully expressed and embodied the tendencies and

[1] Strabo, xiv. 473.

feelings of the higher Jewish thought of this age. The wide divergence between the spirit of Paul and Gamaliel has created doubts as to the relation which is said to have existed between them, but this objection has been refuted in the light of other historical parallels. Alexander was without doubt a pupil of Aristotle; yet, however great the influence of the philosopher on his royal pupil, its traces are hard to perceive, though their absence throws no discredit upon the well-authenticated relation.[1] The vital energy and vehemence of St. Paul's nature are sufficient to account for the differences which existed between him and Gamaliel. Even if these differences present insuperable difficulties to critics of a somewhat supersensitive disposition, there are manifest indications of an education which could be given only by one who was deeply learned in all the phases of Jewish theological thought as it existed in Palestine in the first Christian century. According to St. Paul's own account, he was a most violent, zealous, and fanatical Jew. He became the most passionate, self-sacrificing, and devoted of Christians. And this, not by a gradual development or easy transition, but by a sudden and violent revolution. He was changed from an anti-Christian Jew to an anti-Jewish Christian.[2] This also, with-

[1] Beyschlag, *N. T. Theologie*, B. ii. S. 7.

[2] "Mit dem Umschlage des Paulus aus einem antichristlichen Judaismus zu einem antijudaistischen Christenthum hangt ohne Zweifel der sein ganzes Denken beherrschenden Gegensatz von Sünde und Gnade zusammen."—A. Hilgenfeld, *Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Theologie*, B. xviii. S. 162.

out eliminating his intense and characteristic Jewish nature and habits of thought.

These facts must be recognized in order to reach a clear understanding of St. Paul. The problem is not simple but complex, and the various elements which enter into and mould his thought are derived from the most various sources. His own personal experience, as in all genuine men, had a profound effect upon the character and depth of his thinking, but not primarily upon the form under which or in which it was presented. No one can doubt that the peculiar order and development of his thought were dependent upon his own special experience. But before and behind his Christian experience lay his Jewish inheritance of life and learning. His sensitive nature was saturated with the feelings and sentiments of his own generation. He opened a new world, and believed that the story which he told was the vision of the new eyes which Christ had given him. The language, the images, the forms of thought were not only Jewish: but more, they were those of his own day and generation, learned in Jewish schools and the daily intercourse of life. Great men in spite of superficial differences are much alike, and a recent critic of St. Paul has instituted a comparison between him and Luther. The fiery eloquence which roused Europe found its root and inspiration in Christ and the Scriptures, but no student of Luther fails to recognize distinct traces of his scholastic training and the very marked influence which it exerted upon the form and fashion of his utterances. So in the

teaching of St. Paul we find, besides the original Hebrew and Christian elements of his thought, another, which did not come from the Law or the Prophets, but from the Rabbinical Schools of Palestine.[1]

This characteristic element needs to be distinguished as far as possible from the specific Christian ingredient and carefully analyzed. The latter formed the content of his life and teaching; the Jewish or Rabbinical training supplied the forms under which it would to a large degree be presented.[2] It is, moreover, the close and thorough union between the two which constitutes the striking peculiarity of St. Paul's theology.[3] They are so closely related and dependent upon each other, that one cannot be fully appreciated unless it can be clearly distinguished from the other.

The evolution of St. Paul's thought can only be understood by recognizing its various components in their proper order and mutual relation. It is from a study of Jewish theology, in the historical conditions amid which the Jewish mind of this age was moving, that we can obtain some adequate understanding of the peculiar garb in which St. Paul clothed his Christian expression, and which gave the special form to his Christian consciousness. This particular branch of study is still in a very incomplete stage of development; yet it already gives many facts of

[1] Pfleiderer, *Urchristenthum*, S. 153–4.
[2] A. Immer, *Theologie des Neuen Test.*, S. 257.
[3] Pfleiderer, *Paulinismus*, 2 Auf., S. 18.

great value, and throws a broader light than has hitherto been cast upon the great problems of the Pauline theology.

The changes which had taken place in the history of the Jewish People since the Restoration, and the new ideas which had become prevalent subsequent to that event, make the study of the Rabbinical theology of the time of Christ dependent upon a knowledge of those changes in the mode of thought which had taken place.

The sources from which we draw our knowledge of what this theology was do not exist in the Jewish Canon as is popularly supposed, but in the literature which is extra-canonical or post-canonical and in the vast and intricate traditions of the Jewish schools. The great stream which took its rise in the reforms of Ezra, and which was so widely separated from the previous history in its religious aims and ideals, developed after the Greek Conquest—that is, during the two centuries immediately preceding the age of Christ—into two distinct streams. Where the Jewish mind remained under the sway of the more rigid, narrow, and conservative influences of its Palestinian surroundings, it developed the Pharisaical theology of the Palestinian synagogue. Where it came in contact with the more genial and cultivated influences of Greek thought, it was expanded and softened into that peculiar form of syncretism which we call the Hellenistic theology of Alexandria.[1]

Alexandrianism and Palestinianism constitute the

[1] Pfleiderer, *Paulinismus*, 2 Auf., S. 201.

two distinct varieties of Jewish religious speculation in the age of St. Paul, and in his writings we can see very clear traces of the influence of both these modes of thought.[1]

It has been said that it is impossible to prove whether St. Paul found the ideas which he expresses already in existence, or whether he evolved them from his own Christian speculation. If it is conceded that it is impossible to prove their derivation, at least it will be granted that there is something to be gained by simply placing these ideas side by side and noting the resemblances which exist between St. Paul's ideas and the prevailing teachings of the Jewish schools as we find them either in the literature of his own or previous generations, or surviving in the writings of a subsequent period.

The theology of St. Paul, using that term in its widest sense, is too large a subject to deal with in this manner, and some definite line must be chosen to limit the range of examination and confine it to a territory which will contain that which is recognized to be of the most essential value and importance. To any one who thinks seriously over the changes

[1] "According to Acts vi. 9, there were synagogues of Syrian and Alexandrian Jews at Jerusalem who kept themselves separated from the other synagogues, and it is very possible that Gamaliel, the teacher of St. Paul, who the Rabbins assert was a lover of Grecian wisdom, may have sought to spread such learning among the younger and more eager Jews. Simon Magus and Josephus are evidences of the influence of Alexandrian ideas in Samaria." —Daehne, *Judisch-Alexandrische Religions Philosophie*, B. ii. S. 229.

in thought in this age, as well as the perpetual change which seems to mark the whole life of the past, it is obvious that there is a profound dissatisfaction with the popular religious ideals and accredited religious teaching on the great subject of life itself. All attempts to set up the favourite standards or ideals of another age are merely efforts, no matter how described, to substitute something which is thought better for that which is acknowledged to be defective. It must be conceded that with the vast majority of Christians the ideal of the Christian life is still a problem, or, if they do not recognize it as a problem, the vast unrest which is affecting the whole civilized world, socially, politically, intellectually, and ecclesiastically, would offer clear testimony that the highest and most satisfying ideal of human life had by no means been fully apprehended or realized even by the most intelligent guides of this age. St. Paul had a most clear and definite ideal of life, and all his days were spent in winning it. It was large and lofty enough to give room for his noblest ambitions and free play for all his powers. It is the way this ideal was attained, the antecedent conditions of thought which prevailed to give it the special form of expression it found, and the consequences and inferences involved, which will define the special portion of St. Paul's teaching here to be examined.

St. Paul's theology has been looked upon too often from the abstract or theoretical point of view. Yet there never was a human being who ever thought whose ideas were so completely bound up in the

harness of practical life. St. Paul has never given an outline of what might be called his system, although all systematizers have been fond of asserting the contrary. What he has done has been to give single doctrinal expositions which have been inspired by certain motives or called forth by certain occasions, and these motives and occasions are invariably the most practical and human.

As a consequence, the particular presentation varies more or less with each occasion, and these variations have been the torment of the theoretical or speculative student.[1] Recognizing this fact, we may still grasp the broad fundamental idea which underlies each expression of it, which has been set forth with such variety and force. The power of St. Paul's thought has been recognized by every student of the New Testament, and the most various explanations have been offered as the key to it. Baur has correctly asserted that "The formation of the doctrinal conceptions (Lehrbegriffe) of St. Paul is the most important step in the development of early Christianity;"[2] but when later he asserts that "The antithesis of Judaism and Christianity is the starting-point of his system of thought,"[3] one cannot but feel that here is a fair illustration of that 'vigour and rigour' of German theologians which excited the late Mr. Matthew Arnold. It must be admitted, however, that the particular form of St.

[1] Weizsäcker, *Das Apostolische Zeitalter der Christlichen Kirche*, S. 120.

[2] *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, S. 128. [3] *Ibid.*, 132.

Paul's theological thought was developed through his controversies with Judaism, although the ideas themselves were not due to this cause.

Neander's view of the variety of Apostolic teaching hardly seems more satisfactory, for it is still based upon a theory, but a theory which has not the full support of the facts. That the first Christian teachers "appropriated the doctrine in a living manner, in accordance with their various constitutional qualities and their several peculiarities of education and life," [1] is undoubtedly true, but the phrase is too vague, and seems to emphasize the part of the individual temperament in the exposition of thought in a way which makes the necessity or value of the historical antecedents superfluous, and assumes a definite body of doctrine given as a starting-point.

If we are to believe St. Paul, the beginning, or at least the conscious beginning, of his Christian experience was made on the road to Damascus. What psychological processes antedated this event we can only discern by noting what ideas from his past life lie imbedded in the expression of his Christian consciousness, and how they determine or modify that expression. The revelation of the will of God through Jesus Christ to him did not find him in a state unfitted for its apprehension and reception, and co-operated with previous trains of thought to make his submission more perfect and complete. It is generally stated by writers on this subject that the starting-point of St. Paul's theology is the Doctrine

[1] *Training and Planting*, etc., p. 380.

of Sin. This statement is true in this sense only, that the Doctrine of Sin is the formal, though not the actual, beginning of his processes of thought. The sense of sin in the developed form in which it is expressed in the Epistle to the Romans is the reflex experience of the sense of righteousness and holiness which were revealed in Jesus Christ. If the revelation of Jesus Christ did not antedate his deepest expression of sin, one would expect to find in St. Paul's utterances on this subject just those ideas which were prevalent in the theology of the Palestinian schools of the first century of the Empire, and no more. Undoubtedly we do find these thoughts, but we find also a consciousness and a passion of feeling which no Jew, be he Pharisee or Rabbin, ever felt before Paul of Tarsus poured forth the thoughts of his heart. The form in which the Doctrine of Sin was expressed came to St. Paul from his Jewish teachers, but the motive which gave it such peculiar and special prominence was the intense and burning consciousness with which he apprehended the purity and perfection of Christ's love for him. If we collect the various expressions on this subject of sin which we find in Jewish literature, and then compare them with what St. Paul himself has said, we shall see, to some extent at least, how much he owed to his teachers, and how much sprang out of his own Christian experience. We shall thus be able to understand St. Paul much better, because phrases which have been obscured or distorted in their meaning by incorrect exegesis will,

by a comparison with the prevailing thought of the times, be put in a much stronger and clearer light.

The teaching which the Old Testament contains on the subject of the nature and constitution of the first man and the character of his transgression, is of the briefest and most general nature. The very simplicity and pictorial character of the language shows the unreflecting age out of which it sprang. Under the influence of philosophical ideas or a growing perception of the consequences which might be inferred from the poetical phrases of the book of Genesis, the later Jewish theologians, in the interest of a speculative transcendentalism, qualified the simple phrase, "Let us make man in our own image," by interpolating the explanation that it was not the image of God, but the image of the angel of Service.[1] This became a dogma of Jewish theology and prevailed in all their speculations. In his constitution man has embodied four attributes or elements from above and four from below. His higher or heavenly qualities are, that he stands upright or moves as an angel; he speaks as the angel of Service; he has knowledge as the angel, and he sees as the angel.[2] This man also consists of body and soul. The first is made of the lower elements, taken out of the dust but organized for the fulfilling of the Thora.[3] The moral attitude of this individual so created is that of indifference

[1] Weber, *System der Altsynagogalen Palästinischen Theologie*, S. 150.

[2] Weber, S. 202.

[3] *Ibid.*, 203

towards God.[1] Yet, at the same time, in the very act of creation the Creator imparted a power for evil, or an impulse or tendency which may bring him in conflict with his Creator.[2] But, according to the Talmud, the evil impulse, though existing in the first man from the very beginning, was dormant or at rest. The man was at first pure and pious. He was no transgressor as yet, although one might not assert that he had a definite, positive possession of original righteousness.[3] Whatever impressions come to him through his senses, he cannot determine or control; but whatever acts he undertakes or completes, these he himself decides. In the matter of choice or selection he is absolutely free, neither predestinated to good or evil. Yet, on the other hand, he is more or less limited and influenced by the sensuous impulse within him which receives nourishment or food from the outside. Along with this impulse for evil is an impulse for good. The first dwells in the left side of man's breast, and the other in the right. Thus man is conditioned from the very beginning by the double impulses which dwell in his bosom.[4] The nature of the Fall or the original disobedience of Adam is regarded as simply the transgression or violation of a single commandment of God, which does not, however, produce necessarily any separation or antagonism between man and God if Adam had not added to disobedience refusal to repent. In this act of disobedience the

[1] Weber, S. 203.
[2] *Ibid.*, 204.
[3] *Ibid.*, 206.
[4] *Ibid.*, 210.

Serpent of Genesis is regarded as the tempter, and is identified with Satan. This identification is not found anywhere in the canonical writings of the Old Testament, but appears first in the literature of the Greek period,[1] where the identification is clearly implied. That this act of Adam was the original cause and source of human sin could not be inferred from the earlier historical books of the Old Testament, and the Prophets and Psalms offer no explanation. It is rather regarded as a fact of universal experience, and accepted without any reflections or attempts at solution (Hosea vi. 7; Job xxxi. 33; Psalm lxxxii. 7). The later Jewish writers, however, seem to regard the assumption of the derivation of sin from the first human pair as beyond question; and the earliest reference to it is expressed with such directness, as to leave no doubt that this idea had passed the tentative stage and was already familiar to the mind of the writer.[2] But there is a distinction to be noted here which indicates that a divergence had already begun between the Palestinian and Alexandrian stream of thought. The difference is that the Alexandrian school regarded woman as the instrument by means of which sin entered into the world,[3] while the Palestinian school seemed to consider Adam as the typical man and the origin and cause of the introduction of sin into the world.[4]

[1] Wisdom ii. 23, 24.
[2] Wisdom ii. 24; Sirac. xxv. 24.
[3] Philo, *De Leg. Alleg.*, ii. 18, 19.
[4] Immer, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, S. 256.

The immediate results of the transgression of Adam, according to the Jewish theology, were six in number.

1. He lost the reflection of the divine glory which before the Fall shone in his face.

2. The immortality which God had bestowed upon him in his original condition. On account of sin this was taken away, and death for himself and his successors was thus brought upon them.

3. Through his transgression Adam lost his original size. He had been at first 100 ells in height.

4. He also lost the fruit of the field.

5. The fruit of the tree was destroyed, for the earth was cursed and brought up thorns and briers.

6. The light by which the world was created, and which was withdrawn on the seventh day, was now lost. All the splendour and glory of life passed away through the Fall. Instead, plagues and curses were laid upon man. The moral consequences also were that man became subject to a curse and guilty of death. The right attitude or relation towards God is rendered extremely difficult of attainment. The two moral inclinations or impulses which existed in Adam before the Fall still remain after the Fall, though their relation is somewhat changed. The state of righteousness has become much more difficult, but at the same time much more deserving. Man's freedom remains still after the Fall as before it. There is hereditary guilt, but not hereditary sin. "*The Fall of Adam has brought death upon the whole race of man, but not sin in the sense of a necessity of*

sinning. Sin is the result of the decision of each individual. It is a matter of universal experience, but in itself not a necessary and inevitable result of the Fall."[1] It is obvious that we are moving in an atmosphere far different from that of the age of the monarchy, and that the imagination is by far the most active faculty exercised, and furnishes the greater portion of the material upon which the speculation and ingenuity of these teachers were employed.

The question naturally arose as to the relation of the soul and body, and the responsibility in the case of sin which attaches to each of them. A most ingenious illustration was offered to demonstrate the truth. "There was a king who had a garden, and therein were ripe grapes, figs, and pomegranates. Then said the king to himself, 'If I place as a guard one who is able to see, he will go in and eat my ripe fruit. What shall I do? I will place two guards, one blind and the other lame.' These protected the garden. But as they sat and snuffed the fragrance of the rich ripe fruit, the lame man said to the blind one, 'I see beautiful ripe fruit in the garden. Come, let me ride upon your shoulders and I will guide you, and thus we will get this fruit and divide it and eat it.' Then the lame man rode upon the shoulders of the blind one. He brought the fruit and they both ate it. Some time later the king came, sought the ripe fruit, and found it not. Then said he to the lame man, 'Who has given it

[1] Weber, S. 217.

to you?' 'Have I feet?' said this one. Then said he to the blind man, 'Who has given it to you?' 'Have I eyes?' said this one. Then the king caused the lame man to ride upon the shoulders of the blind man, and said, 'As you have thus together stolen and eaten the ripe fruit, so will I also judge you together.' So does God do with man. He brings the soul and places it in the body, for it is said, "He calls heaven and earth to judge his people." Heaven is the soul. Earth is the body. The soul has insight, but no power to act. The body is without insight, but it is the instrument by which the act is completed. So are soul and body. Since they are closely united in the act of sin, they are both responsible; but a higher responsibility attaches to the soul, since only by its knowledge can the act be prevented."[1]

It is obvious, from the material which has been brought before us, that the problem of sin was one which occupied the most earnest attention of the serious students of man's history among Jewish scholars and writers. As the existence of evil and sin is the great problem of human history from the point of view of man's experience, it could not reasonably be expected that the solution reached by these Jewish theologians would be satisfactory or meet the highest requirements of the moral consciousness of mankind. Their conceptions lacked not only depth, but breadth. Each individual relative to sin was, so to speak, creative. Sinfulness was co-extensive with sinful acts or transgressions,

[1] Weber, S. 222–223.

and was measured by the number of these sinful acts committed. As a consequence, sinlessness was always regarded as in itself possible, since all acts lie within the region of human choice. Although the universal experience of mankind offers no instances of sinlessness, such experience establishes only the fact that all men have sinned, but furnishes no *a priori* objection to the possible existence of a life free from sin.[1] Since the tendency or inclination to sin in man was one which existed by virtue of his constitution, for whose existence he is not responsible, it naturally resulted that when the question of guilt and responsibility arose, the problem was capable of various explanations. Different degrees of limitation would most easily, and we may say inevitably, be placed upon this responsibility. When sin expresses itself in act, it by no means follows that this deed is a personal act in the full sense of the word. The inherent tendency in man is the cause of it, and the personal element enters in only so far as the individual assents to, or co-operates with, his secret inclination. This assent or co-operation is the measure of his guilt, for in it alone does his will unfold its powers. The inclination to sin is the result of the evil tendency in the heart, or the 'Jezer.' This tendency to sin is thus a part of the natural constitution of man; and God, not man, is responsible for this. However sinful man may be, his guilt is reduced in the last analysis to a minimum. The lusts of the body are the natural expression of his

[1] Weber, S. 231.

physical constitution. They make him miserable and sinful, but they do not make him guilty. Regarded thus, the actual condition of man is more worthy the divine sympathy and compassion than of judgment and punishment.[1] This method of the Jewish theologians of regarding sin from the point of view of the single specific act and judgment, not as a personal condemnation, but rather the punishment of individual transgressions, destroyed all organic connection between character and life, and left the whole problem of human responsibility in a fragmentary and chaotic state. How widely this mode of thought prevailed, and how deeply it had penetrated into the popular mind, we see from the Gospel narrative. "And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John ix. 1–3).

On the further question as to the relation between sin and death, the opinions of Jewish teachers seem to have wavered somewhat. Some apparently saw no necessary connection between them, but, rather, that death was predestinated to man from his creation. Another opinion, and the one which seems to have prevailed most extensively, was that death was the result of Adam's disobedience and transgression. It is true man had been created

[1] Weber, S. 233–234.

mortal in the sense that he could die, but death itself was a result or penalty of his own deliberate act.[1] The Jewish conception of the solidarity of the race was so deep and strong, that no Jew could think of this act of Adam and its consequences as isolated, but felt that it inevitably involved all his descendants in the same fate. It is said that Adam himself recognized this fact, and when he saw that death had entered into the world he sat 130 years fasting and sorrowing, separated from his wife.[2] This fact of the transmission of death to Adam's descendants inevitably suggested certain difficulties which must be considered and, if possible, explained. Death was fully recognized as the punishment of Adam's transgression. The question then arose, In what light can it be viewed in the case of his descendants? If sin and guilt are not hereditary or transmissible, how then can their punishment be? Yet it is one of the primary facts of life, that death—that is, the punishment of sin—comes to all. One of the fundamental Jewish axioms was, "There is no death without sin; no chastisement without transgression." The deep moral sense of man antedates perception of the ethical problems which surround him, and remains unchanged in spite of all the subtleties and refinements with which he attempts to meet these difficulties. The perplexity which arose from the fact that death comes to all, both evil and good, was met with the ingenious but very inconclusive state-

[1] On the other hand, compare Wisdom ii. 23.

[2] Weber, S. 238.

ment that the godless died in order that they might not wander farther from God, and the righteous that they might be taken away from the ever-enduring struggle of life. The real issue is never taken up, and the two propositions—the Universality of Death and the Universality of Sin—were never sounded to their depths and brought with all their overwhelming force before the mind of man.

When we turn to St. Paul's writings we see in a general way how much he owed to his Jewish teachers, and how much he inherited from the past, and more clearly and definitely what he received from the revelation of Jesus Christ in him, and what belongs to the vastly higher state upon which he entered through his conversion. In considering St. Paul's ideas on this profound subject, we must, if possible, free our minds from all the later accretions, the theories and interpretations which theologians of different schools and periods have attached to his words. We must also bear in mind how rich and varied are the metaphors and images which he uses to denote the relations and effects of sin upon human life and human destiny. The vividness with which abstract terms are expressed gives them a concreteness which oftentimes confuses the sight, and makes us doubt whether we are in the right intellectual atmosphere and mood for a correct apprehension of their meaning.

Before attempting to examine in detail the ideas of St. Paul on this subject, it will be necessary to know something about the literary theory and the

Canons of interpretation which he applied to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and which was one of the links which bound him to the Rabbinical schools of his time, and which, when understood, shows that the literal and logical accuracy of later times would by no means be accepted by him. The method of Scriptural interpretation which was generally adopted at this time by both the Palestinian and Alexandrian schools was that which is so well known to students of theology and church history as the Allegorical, and Philo of Alexandria was undoubtedly its great representative. Although Philo was a contemporary of St. Paul, there is no evidence which goes to show that the Apostle was familiar with the writings of the older man. On the other hand, there is evidence in abundance to prove that he was familiar with, and adopted, the method so generally in use at this time, and that the common sources of the later Jewish theology were well known to him.

In 1 Cor. ix. 9, where Deut. xxv. 4 is quoted, the Canon of interpretation applied is one of the allegorical rules laid down by Philo—that is, that the literal meaning of a passage of Scripture is not to be accepted if in any way it seems to state something which is unsuited to the true thought of God's character and modes of action.[1] In 1 Cor. x. 1–4 St. Paul's method of interpretation is the same as Philo's. In the Alexandrian teacher the manna is the 'Divine Word' (θεῖος λόγος), and the rock

[1] Siegfried, *Philo von Alexandria*, S. 305.

is the 'Wisdom of God' (Σοφια του Θεου).[1] If it is not possible to distinctly affirm that the writings of Philo were known to St. Paul, there is sufficient evidence to prove that one of the books well known to us, not included in the Canon, was very familiar to him, and exercised a perceptible influence, if not on his thought, at least upon the form of it. A comparison of the Epistles of St. Paul with the book of Wisdom will show how thoroughly familiar he was with the ideas expressed in that work. The resemblances are not accidental. They were the inevitable result of a thorough education at the hands of one of the leading Rabbins of Jerusalem in the first century of our era. A comparison of the passages subjoined may lead on to the conclusion that the influence of the book of Wisdom is more apparent than real; yet the influence actually exists, and forms no inconsiderable element in the shaping of St. Paul's thought and expression on certain definite points.[2]

[1] *De Leg. Alleg.*, iii. 56; Immer, *Theol. des Neuen Test.*, 255–256; Siegfried, 305. Other passages which show the influence of Jewish tradition and exegesis are 1 Cor. xv. 40 ff; 2 Cor. iii. 7–13; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Gal. iii. 16–19; Gal. iv. 21–31; 2 Tim. iii. 8.

[2] *Der Erhaltniss der paulinischen Schriften zur Sapientia Salamonis*, Eduard Grafe; *Theologische Abhandlungen*, Carl von Weizsäcker. Sap. xi. 12, xii. 12 ff., comp. Rom. ix. 19–23; Sap. xv. 7, comp. Rom. ix. 24; Sap. ix. 15, comp. 2 Cor. v. 14; Sap. ix. 17, comp. 1 Cor. ii. 8, 10, 11; Sap. vii. 28, comp. 1 Cor. ii. 9; Sap. vii. 27, comp. 1 Cor. ii. 10; Sap. ix. 14, comp. 1 Cor. ii. 14; Sap. ix. 11, comp. 1 Cor. ii. 15; Sap. ix. 13, comp. 1 Cor. ii. 16; Sap. xi. 23, comp. Rom. xi. 32; Sap. v. 17–20, comp. Ephes. vi. 11, 13, 15, 16, 17; Sap. i. 13, 14, comp. Rom. viii. 19 ff.

It may seem to some as if the influence of St. Paul's Jewish training had been exaggerated or overstated, but as it is too often dismissed with a mere reference, it seems necessary to show, to some extent at least, how much he was under the influence of the current theology of the Rabbinical schools.

The material for ascertaining the complete indebtedness of St. Paul to his Jewish teachers has not yet been put at the service of students, and it may be that the amount still remaining will not be, even when discovered, sufficient to satisfy a thoroughly sceptical mind; but enough has been found to prove that such dependence really did exist, and modifies to a large degree the way in which we should study the writings of the great Apostle.

Turning now to a consideration of St. Paul's expressions on this great subject of Sin, we must study, in the first place, his conception of the original constitution of man. Any one who reads the 7th chapter of Romans in the light of the prevailing pharisaical theology, cannot but feel that the dualism in the nature of man, which is so distinctly realized and so emphatically asserted, has ceased to be for St. Paul a mere dogma of the schools, and has become of the very essence of his thought of himself. The tendency or evil impulse has become a 'law' in his members, and the good impulse has become the 'law' of his mind, and these two are waging ceaseless and relentless war against each other (Rom. vii. 21–23).

The same division in the person between the lower and the higher elements, which is a characteristic feature of the Rabbinical theology, still survives, though in a more intensified form, in the conception of flesh and spirit. This dualism of St. Paul's thought, instead of being a semi-philosophical doctrine, has become a deep and most agonizing disruption of his personal life. The form of statement may be derived from the schools, and doubtless is; but the evidence for its existence is not derived by him from a general law or an abstract proposition, but has its ground in his own individual experience, and its root is in his own consciousness, which is all alive and writhing under the burning sense of the realization of this fact. When he comes to define this lower power which checks and thwarts the growth of the higher life and exerts such a definite influence for the worse, he calls it sin. Any one, on reading St. Paul, will recognize how difficult it is to determine just what he meant by sin. He nowhere gives any precise definition of it, and this from the nature of the case we could not expect. He is nowhere writing to develop a theory, but to appeal to the consciences and consciousness of men. The intensity with which he apprehends the fact itself leaves him entirely indifferent to mere definitions. A common and universal experience, for so he regards it, leaves him no room or need for finely drawn descriptions. We do not know whether he considered it as having a personal existence or whether it was an impersonal law, whether it was

a mere fact of experience or the development and expression of an original element of man's constitution. There are phrases sufficient, taken simply by themselves, to justify any one of those inferences. One thing may be most positively affirmed, and that is that sin to St. Paul was no mere negation. He was a Hebrew, not a Greek. He saw life from the ethical point of view, and not the intellectual. To him it was a tremendous reality, a most powerful force operative in the life of man, and easily to be proved, (1) from universal history; (2) from the experience of the individual soul; (3) from the teachings of Scripture. The value of these arguments was of unquestionable validity to St. Paul, and no one can well deny their worth if the evidence still sustains the conclusions of the Apostle.

When we come to examine the actual constitution of sin, in what it really consists, it seems to have a double character or to be composed of two elements:—(1) It is partly moral defilement (Rom. vi. 19); (2) partly an opposition to the divine will expressed in the true oriental language of a contrast between light and darkness (2 Cor. vi. 14).

When we approach the question more closely and ask in whom sin originated, and by what channel it made its way into the world, we find that of the two views prevalent at this time, the Alexandrian and Palestinian, St. Paul accepts the latter, and fixes upon man the responsibility for its existence.

When we seek an explanation as to the origin of

evil and sin, or the means by which they first entered into the world, we find two suggestions which appear in St. Paul's writings, both of which have their parallel in Jewish theology, but which are quite differently treated by him, and apparently quite differently regarded. The one which is least noticed, and which would probably not be noticed at all had we no Jewish precedent to fall back upon, is that which occurs in the remarkable passage in 1 Cor. xv. 45–50, where the contrast between Christ and Adam, the present life and the future, is instituted. The positive assertion that "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," seems to have in it an echo of the Palestinian teaching as to the constitution of man. According to that view, man had two tendencies within him—one good, the other evil—and the latter was associated with his physical constitution. Whether this is so or not is a matter of comparatively slight importance, since in the particular passage which bears most directly upon this subject quite another point of view is taken, but one which by no means necessarily involves a contradiction of this interpretation. In the much-debated passage, Rom. v. 12–21, the existence of sin as an historical fact is directly attributed to the transgression of Adam. Here is the beginning of sin, in and through the act of the individual man. But it should be distinctly borne in mind that St. Paul does not directly, explicitly, or unequivocally assert that sin passed on, through the transgression of Adam,

to the race. He nowhere states that it is imputed to man by virtue of Adam's representative character, or inherited by him by virtue of the solidarity of the race, or, in the more technical phrase of Augustinianism, by Traducianism. What St. Paul does assert is, "That death passed upon all men" (Rom. v. 12). This is the first proposition, and the statement following it, "For that all have sinned," must not be interpreted in the light of subsequent theological theorists which have used this passage to justify themselves, but from the point of view of the men of his own age. Nor will laborious exegesis based upon strict grammatical and philological laws settle the issue, unless, indeed, their application is so obvious as to preclude any difference of opinion; but the true way seems to be to combine the philological method with the results attained by a study of the contemporaneous Jewish theology on this point. The assertion that there is a 'causal connection' between the death which had extended to all and the sin of Adam, on the ground that the sin of Adam was the sin of all men, is not necessarily involved in this statement, or in any of the other passages which refer to this event. In 1 Cor. xv. 22 the unity of the race in Adam involves death, but not necessarily sin, or, at least, it is not so affirmed. The Rabbins of St. Paul's age declared the same thing, and asserted most positively that death, but death alone, had passed over to man through Adam's transgression. "The Fall of Adam has brought death upon the entire race,

but not sin. Sin is the result of the decision of each individual."[1] The fact that the thought of St. Paul had its roots in his previous Rabbinical training has been generally recognized by the best scholars in this department of study. Meyer says, "It may reasonably be assumed that the doctrine of the Apostle had, in the first instance, its historical roots in his Jewish and especially his Rabbinical training, and was held by him even prior to his conversion; and that in his Christian enlightenment he saw no reason for abandoning the proposition, which, on the contrary, he adopted into the system of his Christian views."[2] But when he further says, "From this consequence which the sin of Adam had for all, it results, in virtue of the necessary causal connection primarily ordained by God between sin and death, by reasoning back, *ab effectu ad causam*, that the Fall of Adam was the collective Fall of the entire race, in so far as, in fact, all forfeited Paradise and therewith incurred death,"[3] he does not stand squarely on the ground of the Jewish theologians. These affirmed that the Fall of the entire race in Adam does not prove the sin of the entire race in that event; or, to put it differently, they asserted that the Fall does not prove the unity of the race in the sin of Adam, but only in its results. It cannot be said that in the passages hitherto examined anything more has been asserted by the Apostle. The

[1] Weber, S. 217.
[2] *Commentary on Romans*, pp. 252–253.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 253.

real difficulty, or, at least, the greatest difficulty, is found in the phrase '*παντες ἡμαρτον*' which occurs in the 12th verse of this chapter taken in connection with the 19th verse. In the former case, the assertion that "all have sinned" in itself involves no special difficulty, even if taken for the sin of each individual. This was the common thought of Palestinian theology, and St. Paul may well have inserted it here, without necessarily implying any direct connection of the sin of Adam with the sinfulness of each individual. In the 19th verse, however, he asserts distinctly, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." The difficulty here is that a new idea appears. A purely spiritual connection, rather than a physical one, lies at the root of the parallel instituted by the Apostle. How a moral or spiritual state in one case can be attributed to another individual who has no conscious relation with the disposition predicated, is a difficulty which cannot be overcome. The word which St. Paul uses, '*κατεστάθησαν*,' does not imply any organic process by means of which the condition postulated becomes part of the character or internal life of Adam's descendants, but expresses or indicates merely a forensic attitude or point of view, from which the subject is regarded as from the outside. The difficulty of reconciling these forms of expression with the intense and glowing consciousness from which all the reflections of St. Paul begin, is one which most can appreciate, and

few feel satisfied that they can accomplish. The flood of Christian emotion and conviction swept away with it much of the past, and bore upon its bosom much of the logical refuse of the Rabbinical schools. The difficulties are so great for a satisfactory interpretation of many passages in St. Paul, that one can only look to the future for a fuller exposition of that vivid mind and lofty soul, and feel that the path of light lies not through the various dogmatic explanations of the Christian schools, but through the slow and careful examination of the various ideas which floated in the atmosphere of St. Paul's early life. We must recognize that in his mind lay a mass of thought which had been shaped by influences, very difficult to be distinctly traced after such a long interval of time, and very easily to be entirely misunderstood or overlooked.

When we examine more in detail the manifestations of sin as described by St. Paul, we find that he assigns to it a particular organ through which it reveals itself. This organ or seat of sin is the flesh. Whether he believes that the flesh is by its original constitution sinful, as was held by some explicitly then, and implicitly by many more then and since, or whether it was that particular side or element of human nature which offered the freest room for the action of the sinful power, is a question which cannot be positively decided from the language of the Apostle. However sinful the flesh may be, it is not the whole man, and the doctrine of absolute depravity

and corruption finds no support either in Jewish theology or the writings of St. Paul. His primary object must always be kept in view. That object is neither a philosophical system nor a scholastic theology, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The intensity of his abhorrence of sin and his moral condemnation of mankind proceed from no convictions of a purely philosophical or abstract nature. The weakness and helplessness which fill him with such despair are not connected with the merely legal or religious requirements which the spiritual nature, or, as he believes, even God himself, demands. In Rom. ii. 14, 15, he seems to recognize the ability of man to fulfil, at least from the legal standpoint, the requirements of the law. But in the revelation of Jesus Christ there is an overpowering radiance of holiness which fills him with an unspeakable sense of shame and sin. His whole conception of sin is changed, and changed by this new ideal of life which has been set forth before him. The unity and harmony of the nature and character of Christ with the will of God, and also the revelation of that will in him, shows St. Paul the abyss which lies between him and this new standard of life. This slavery of sin under which he groans is the incapacity to attain, not relative freedom, but absolute spiritual likeness to God in Christ Jesus. That cry under the tyranny of sin is the cry of the soul after God and His absolute holiness. The Apostle craves for himself and others that which he sees Jesus Christ possesses, and which is the very essence of God's

being—an absolutely holy will. This is the only ideal good either in heaven or earth.

The whole passion of St. Paul's Christian life, the very heart of all his song, was not obedience to the divine commands, but conformity with the divine nature; not fulfilment of the law, but inward identification of his will with the will of God. This is not the spirit of the dialectician, and dialectics were but the superficial and unessential elements of one of the most intense and passionate natures which through all the long history of the Christian Church has loved and served its Lord. If we study St. Paul's language with these facts clearly in mind, we will easily be able to distinguish the purely technical form of his thought from the great spiritual consciousness which lies behind, and which must be ever present to a man, no matter what he calls himself, when he stands before the cross of Christ or feels within him the mystery and majesty of that love. To some it may seem as if an undue amount of attention has been devoted to a subject which is now so often treated in a purely conventional manner. The importance of St. Paul's reflections on sin consists not so much in their philosophical value as in their moral and spiritual worth. No large and noble ideal of life, none which can give life dignity and seriousness, can exist without some of that deep and awful sense of the eternal righteousness which lies behind the most austere and solemn view which man can take of his character and destiny. In feeling so deeply the problem of sin, St. Paul was only

expressing one of the fundamental characteristics of his age, and which has also been a characteristic of all ages which mark the upward progress of the human race. As one reads the writings of the nobler and more serious-minded of the Gnostics, and studies the elements which composed their systems, one cannot but be deeply impressed with the place which this subject of sin and evil has in their thought. It was *the problem* to them, and they all, without exception, failed to throw any light upon it or furnish any solution for it. In St. Paul it represented the moral side of life, but was not the root and source of his Christian consciousness. It is the element of depth in his life, but does not set forth the full dignity and breadth which belonged to his conception of his Christian life. This expressed itself in another form, and one which brought him not only into conflict with his own age, but, to a degree at least, has given him an unique and solitary position in the history of the Christian Church.

In his conception of the law as a Jew, and the contrast which his subsequent thought of the same revealed, we have one of the most striking and original elements of the new Christian ideal as presented in his consciousness. His sense of sin was a part of his human consciousness fostered by his Jewish education, and antedated his conversion, although it was through the Gospel that it received such a tremendous development that it became one of the primary factors of his Christian consciousness.

His attitude towards the law was a far different one from his attitude towards this other element of his life. The one was a revolution, the other only a development, although a very radical one. In ascertaining the position which the law occupied in the thought and life of the later Jews, we have, as our starting-point, that great historical event which shaped, and in a sense transformed, the whole subsequent history of the Jewish people—that is, the return from the Captivity. Ezra is a new and, in a certain sense, a greater Moses, so far, at least, as influence and importance are concerned. After him, and through the reforms inaugurated by him, the Thora gradually excluded all other elements from the religious life of the Jew. "The law became through him the exclusive centre of the religious thought and life of all pious Israelites." [1] "The specific character of piety during this period depends on the acknowledgment of the dignity of the law. The age of this acknowledgment may be determined almost to the day and hour. It dates from that important occurrence, whose epoch making importance is only brought forward in the book of Nehemiah—the reading of the law by Ezra, and the solemn engagement of the people to observe it" (Neh. viii.–x.).[2] This new conception of the religious life grew more intense and all-absorbing as the centuries rolled by. No language could be more exclusive,

[1] Weber, S. 9.

[2] E. Schurer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ* (Eng. Trans., Division ii. vol. i. p. 306).

and certainly none more exaggerated, than that which was applied to the Thora. It was looked upon as practically eternal, for it existed before the creation of the world, and was intended to continue not only through Time, but also through Eternity. It is the 'Eternal Wisdom' to whom God addressed himself in Creation when he said, "We would make man in our own image" (Gen. i. 16).[1] Around the Thora all the central ideas of man's existence were grouped. The language is attributed to Simon the Just that "The world stands on three things—the Thora, the Temple Service, and Good Works.[2] But in the course of time the Thora not only took precedence of all other elements, but absorbed into itself everything which pertained to religious feeling and religious thought. The world itself seemed to some to have been made for the specific purpose of furnishing a stage for the Thora, so great was their devotion to it. Not only was the intellectual and religious life concentrated upon the study and observance of the law, but most of the political history also has relations to the Thora. The great struggle with the Selucidæ, B.C. 164, was not about political freedom, but a fuller and completer observance of the law. Under the impulse of this one dominating influence, the whole previous history of Israel was re-read. The forty years' wandering in the desert, it was asserted, was for the purpose of learning the Thora. So thoroughly was the whole history of man identified with the Jewish law, that

[1] Weber, S. 14. [2] *Ibid.*, S. 7.

Adam himself was represented as having been circumcised. The extravagant extent to which the reverence of the Jew for his law went, is familiar to all students of Jewish history. It occupied the first place in Jewish theology, and formed with the expanded subtleties and refinements of the Scribes the very heart of Jewish religion. So important was the law in the eye of the Jew, that the account in Ex. xxxii. of the defection of the people was to the history of Israel as significant in its character and consequences as the Fall of Adam was for collective humanity. The study of the Thora had, moreover, in itself a value which was attributed to nothing else. It was, of course, obligatory on all, and the highest duty of a parent to a child was to teach it the law. Forgiveness of sins was to be obtained by a study of the law, and after the destruction of the Temple it replaced sacrifice as a means of propitiation. "Greater is the law than the building of the sanctuary," is a speech which testifies to the devotion to the Thora. Some went so far as to say that even if one learned in the law fell into sin, God still esteemed him on account of his knowledge of the Thora. The wide distinction between the ignorant and the wise in the law, separated the people into two classes. To one belonged death, to the other salvation. This deep-rooted conviction finds its expression in the language of the Pharisees in the Gospel. "This multitude which knoweth not the law is accursed" (John vii. 49). The power of this system of legalism held every ardent Jew in an

unrelaxing grasp. Its authority was paramount and unquestionable. St. Paul, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, touching the law blameless, had steeped his life in its strong colours.

In considering what he has to say on this subject, we perceive that there is a distinction in his mind which has only an imperfect expression in his writings, but which evidently must be recognized in order fully to appreciate his thought. He recognizes a law written on the heart of the Gentiles, as well as a special legal system which was in operation among the Jews. But he does not expand the thought or show the relation, if any, which existed between the two. Under ὁ νομος the Apostle generally understands the Mosaic law in its fullest extent. That he excluded, or intended to exclude, the developments and refinements of the Rabbinical schools from his conception of the law, we have no reason for believing. On the other hand, educated, as he was, we must believe that the term was equivalent in his writings to the generally accepted use among the people at this time. The difference said to exist between the ethical and ritual elements of the law in St. Paul's mind has a basis in fact, but not in the literary expressions which he uses. In 2 Cor. iii. 6 he seems to imply that there really exists a distinction of a certain kind, but it is one merely between the literary form and the spiritual contents. This distinction was recognized by all the teachers of the age who had adopted the

allegorical method of interpretation. Some critics have gone beyond this, and asserted that the presence or absence of the Greek article clearly marks the existence in St. Paul's mind of a distinction between the Mosaic law and the abstract or ideal law of morality. This theory, however, has been taken in directly opposite ways by different scholars, and yet the exceptions to the use supposed to have been established are so many that it is evident that in the great majority of cases the Apostle did not attach any special significance to the absence or presence of the article.[1]

The excessive refinements and subtleties, as well as the hard external form which legalism had given to the religious life of Judaism, bore heavily upon all those whose horizon was expanding under the growth of their moral and spiritual consciousness. The revolt was already prepared even before the conversion of the Apostle, and would probably have taken place in some form or other even had the Gospel not appeared with a living energy which left no room for any other force in the spiritual history of the future. The impatience and sense of oppression which were felt were not directed against the law as an ethical standard, but as a system of casuistry, which it had, in fact, become. This is the degenerate form in which it appears in the hands of

[1] Compare Rom. ii. 13, 15, 18, 20, 23, 26; iv. 15; vii. 1, 5, 14, 21, with Rom. ii. 17, 25, 27; Gal. iii. 17, 18; 1 Cor. ix. 20; Phil. iii. 5. Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der Neutestamentliche Theologie*, B. ii. S. 22, regards the question of the article as purely academic.

the Scribes and Pharisees. This result did not issue from any special moral or intellectual perversity of the theologians, but is one of the inevitable effects of all attempts to conceive religion under the form of law. The Christian teacher is as liable to this mode of thought or system of ethics as the Pharisee, the moment he begins to regard the Gospel from the legal standpoint. The endless entanglements and contemptible puerilities of pharisaical theology are wearisome in the extreme, but they have their counterpart in a far more repulsive and hideous form in the teachings of the Spanish Jesuits of the seventeenth century.

St. Paul, if not seeking, yet felt the want of a different thought and a higher conception of his religious life than that which shaped itself under the standard of the law. He needed a large, free principle of life that should issue from inward motive and personal inspiration, and which would break the bonds of the hard external prescriptions which claimed to define and regulate his life. If the law was looked at in its essence, and regarded only from the point of view of its ethical elements, it could and did reveal his inward repulsion to its demands. In other words, it showed him that sin existed in him; but it armed him with no power, it furnished him with no inspiration, by which he might hope to attain to that lofty life which lay above sin and law. It might create despair, it could not implant hope. This conviction bred of experience came into clearer and stronger light when the revelation of the Gospel

was made to him. He accepted it, and was willing to pass on, without any controversy on this point, to the higher and broader ground of Christ's revelation. But it is at this point in his spiritual development that his own practical experience entered in and formed such an important and influential factor in shaping his later thought of the law and his attitude towards the Jewish Church and Jewish Christians. Christ was the end of the law, but the problem was not fully met by that statement, for there was really a further question as to the relation between the two. How much of the past could legitimately and naturally go over into the future? how was the law to stand to the Gospel? Was it as the dawn which was swallowed up and expanded in the coming day which continued to fulfil its promises, or was the Gospel as the light which banished the darkness and did not permit of the existence of this, without by so much limiting its own sweetness and range? The conception of this Gospel of God as the hope of glory revealed to every man, and in every man through Jesus Christ, made the moving principle of the thought and life of the Apostle, and opening all the paths of the world to those unwearied feet, brought his fellow-countrymen in his footsteps with fiercest anger and deadliest hate in their hearts.

This opposition compelled St. Paul to give a more positive, extreme, and antagonistic form to his statement of the true relation of the law to the Christian than it would otherwise have received. But although he more sharply defines his thought and states it

with greater emphasis on account of this struggle, although he lays open with rigorous and remorseless clearness the chasm between his new ideal and his old, the contrast was always there, and already revealed itself in the very beginnings of his Christian life. It is possible that he might not have worked out this contrast in clear terms had the strife with the Judaisers not sprung up, yet he realized it as a practical motive in the life he led. As a matter of fact, he seems always to have felt the emphasis which the Jews laid upon the possession of the law, and the pride which they took in that fact was shared by him. Intense love and reverence for the law were part of his birthright, and they never died out of his soul. And by this law he did not mean only the ethical contents of the same, but the entire Canon and the whole traditional interpretation of the same.[1] To him this law was holy, righteous, and spiritual (Rom. vii. 12, 14). It was also morally good and beautiful (Rom. vii. 16; 1 Tim. i. 8). In this feeling for the law he followed the traditions of his race and his generation, but it was in the understanding of the purpose and scope of the law that he diverged wide as the poles from his fellow-countrymen.[2] In this divergence he followed no previous teacher, and revived no theory which any devout Jew had ever set forth before. His interpretation of the law, and his

[1] Rom. ix. 4 shows how widely his conception was extended, but no more so than was common among the Pharisaical schools of Palestine.

[2] Pfleiderer, 2 Auf., S. 92.

final rejection of it, was from no disappointment (in the fullest sense of the word) or disparaging feeling for it. Nor was this rejection an outcome of any purely dialectical processes which took place in his own mind. But he had gradually drifted into a position which contained a practical challenge to the Jewish Christians or to those who wished to conceive the Gospel under the form of law. This attitude he was not allowed to occupy without controversy, and out of this controversy came the definition which he gave of the breadth and freedom of the Gospel and his position as the Apostle to the Gentiles. To say that St. Paul deliberately rejected Judaism and broke away in revolt from his old position, and then was brought to the freedom of Christ, is to place the effect before the cause, and invert the real processes of his own soul. The attraction of the higher life revealed in Christ, the submission of his life to Him, and the consequent absorption in and union with Him, involved, in his case at least, the complete exclusion of all other considerations as subordinate and inferior. That passionate cry, so full, so deep, that it seems as if in its perfect concentration none like it has ever come from human lips—"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord!"—permits no qualifications or limitations. He gave his life to Christ. He asked only that Christ might take his life into His keeping. The old land of his forefathers, however dearly loved, sank down out of sight behind him as the gale of this mighty inspiration swept him out on the unknown

sea of the soul's life in Christ. Christ took absolute possession of him—"I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me"—and the new principle of life did not permit any choice on his part. The past must go, and out of his Christian experience was wrought the rejection of the law. This rejection had its justification and endorsement in his Christian consciousness, but found its logical statement in the defence which he put forth under the stress of Jewish opposition. This defence is the effort made to satisfy the minds of those who did not and could not understand these inner movements of life and the mighty impulse which bore him onward. Only a man already in the current could get a glimpse of the wide territory through which the stream passed. The Christian revelation was the assertion that history was not a stagnant pool but a mighty river, and St. Paul was in the very heart of the stream.

When we examine more closely the Apostle's view of the object of the law, we are impressed by the radical change which had taken place in his conception of it. This new position of his has well been called "an inverted or reversed Pharisaism."[1] The Pharisee looked upon the law as the final and ultimate end of the whole divine history. It is said, "The Lord Himself will teach Israel the Thora in the Temple of the new Jerusalem of the Messianic Kingdom." "In the world I have indeed given you the Thora, and you shall occupy yourself with it alone; but in the future world I myself will teach all

[1] A. Hausrath, *Der Apostel Paul*, S. 156.

Israel, and they will learn it and no more forget it."[1] St. Paul regarded the law, on the other hand, as a phase or period in the divine economy which had already lost its authority. "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made." "The law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor" (Gal. iii. 19, 24). This view of the history of the past had its roots in his subjective experience. He could summon no authority to sustain his position, nor did he ask any, except that which could be drawn by each Christian from a comparison of his previous position and his present state in Christ.

The condition of the Gentile world was inferentially the same as that of the Jew from this point of view—that is, it was preparatory or educational and disciplinary. One stage of human history succeeds another, as in the progressive development of the individual one period follows another with its consequent conditions. [What the Apostle says in Gal. iii. 19 does not conflict with this.] The special object in view in the Epistle to the Galatians was best attained by the line of argument there adopted by St. Paul, but in the Epistle to the Romans he presents another view of the law which, although not in conflict with the one just set forth, yet has its ground in a different though not contradictory conception of its relations to the soul. The Apostle's attitude towards

[1] Weber, S. 360.

the law after he became a Christian being always that it was abolished, this fact made his interpretation of the object of the law necessarily different from that of the Jew. The deepest conviction of the Hebrew teacher was that the law was the way of life. By it and through it alone could man attain to that state of righteousness which made him worthy of God's recognition and favour. This whole conception was entirely reversed in the mind of St. Paul. To regard the law in its highest and most spiritual form as an ideal to be realized by man was impossible. No one could possibly fulfil the demands of the law. It was not given for this purpose (Gal. iii. 19). There was quite another object in view. Not for righteousness but for sin did God reveal it (Rom. v. 20, vii. 5, 8; 1 Cor. xv. 56). The belief that the law can in any way produce that holiness which the soul craves is most emphatically denied, and yet this assertion is in the mind of the Apostle perfectly consistent with the goodness of God and the holiness of the law. The law brought sin to light and increased its range and power, and since it produced such results everything which bound the Christian to it was broken. However difficult it may be to reconcile such a view of the law with the conception suggested by its educational purposes, something better and higher was attained by the Apostle as the warfare of life rolled on and the contents of his salvation more fully unfolded themselves. Not by an argument, but by a burst of thanksgiving, are the deep problems of sin, the law, death, and sorrow

wrought out: "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 57). Out of sin, away from the law, up to Christ and sonship to God, was the path of the saved soul. In the eyes of his Jewish contemporaries this mighty sweep above the legalism of religion in any form branded him as a thorough and radical antinomian.

It is in vain that one seeks for refuge from such a conclusion. He himself is the author of this view of him, and the charge was no libel. But the principle of absolute freedom was no abstract one, and did not have its source in the individual rights or individual self-consciousness. The antinomianism of the Apostle is as different from that of the Gnostic sects or those of the Reformation period as his life was different from theirs. Christ was the key to his whole spiritual history, and in Him was the solution of all the great problems of his life. Union with Him was the only condition under which he considered the abrogation of the law, and union with Him was through faith. Or, rather, faith was union with Him.

It is in the definition of faith, or, rather, the expression of what it actually was in the mind of the Apostle, that we find one of the most striking and distinctive features in the spiritual history of St. Paul. No other writer of the New Testament expressed himself in just the same way, and no one offers so marked and individual deviations from the traditional use. More than that, we find more varied uses in his writings than in any other, and a gradual

concentration on one meaning, as his life itself became more and more focussed on the one fact of his spiritual history. The legal conception of religion which had so widely prevailed, and which seemed to have its roots deep in some primary instinct of mankind, had given a tone and definition to even the most common and fundamental religious ideas. The ideas of law and satisfaction, of debt and payment, ruled the whole circle of Jewish religious thought in the days when the Rabbins had reached their highest point of influence. These legal conceptions necessarily affected their definition or interpretation of the idea of faith. The earliest reference to it is in the case of their great forefather Abraham, and his faith, as understood by the Rabbins, was simply a righteous act which was worthy of reward and was so recognized by God. The proof of this lay in the fact that Abraham received the present and the future world as a recognition of the meritorious character of his act.[1] There is, to be sure, great importance to be attached to the fact that this faith had a spiritual element in it, inasmuch as it was unbounded faith and trust in God; but the essential viciousness of the conception was not removed by this concession. Faith in the coming of the Messiah was also regarded as a work which would be recognized and properly rewarded in the day of the establishment of His kingdom. In all the ideas associated with this word in the popular Jewish theology there were none which advanced

[1] Weber, S. 295–6.

beyond the strictest legalism, and the spiritual character of the individual seemed in no way involved. In St. Paul's great contemporary there was an advance made on the Palestinian school, and the line of thought finds many parallels in later Christian writers. Nothing is more striking in a comparison between the teaching of the Palestinian theology and the Alexandrian as represented by Philo than the vast superiority of the latter in depth, breadth, and spirituality of view on this and kindred subjects. These differences show that the elements which constitute them were inherited by Philo, not from his Jewish fathers, but his Greek teachers. The fusion of thought which he represents, and upon whose broad stream he was borne along, contained in it some of the finest seeds of the later Alexandrian theology. In the manner in which he speaks of faith, he approaches more nearly the language and thought of the writers of the New Testament than any other writer of the pre-Christian period. The influence of Platonism is so marked in the Alexandrian Jewish theology, that it is to it that the peculiar form of Philo's statement on this subject must be attributed rather than to the Jewish ideas which he inherited. Before the mind of this Alexandrian Jew hovered the vision of an invisible, ideal world, which was far more real to him than that upon which he looked with such confusion and perplexity in his soul. Above the 'First and only Fair' of Plato rose the 'Creator' of his Jewish faith, the Maker of all things visible and invisible;

but these were not two but One, and in Him the soul of the Jew found his only peace and strength.

From this lofty elevation of spiritual vision, the language in which he describes faith as the capacity of the soul to separate itself from all earthly things, and to trust entirely to the invisible and unseen, becomes entirely intelligible. It is the mark, he says, of a great and heavenly understanding to withdraw from the power of sense and the influence of the world, and trust entirely and only to God who is truth. Living in this invisible and ideal world, faith sees the not existing as something visible and actual. When he speaks of Abraham (*De Mig. Abr.*, 9), the thought involved is very similar to that of St. Paul in Rom. iv. 19 ff.[1]

Any comparison, however, between the teachings of St. Paul and that of any of his predecessors or contemporaries in the Jewish Church only reveals the immense advance in clearness, strength, and power of apprehension which he has made. In his use of the word 'Faith' he evidently attaches quite a number of distinct meanings to it. They are, however, for the most part closely related, and in many ways resemble the uses customary, not only in the nobler Jewish theology, but also in the later Christian Church. Their origin is perfectly obvious, and need not be further examined. But one special meaning, which, in some respects at least, is the

[1] Siegfried, *Philo von Alex.*, S. 307; A. F. Daehne, *Geschichtliche Darstellung der Judisch-Alexandrischen Religions-Philosophie*, Erster Abt., S. 393.

most striking feature in his conception of the new Christian life, needs to be clearly brought out and emphasized. The special causes which led to the particular use referred to can be distinctly traced in the historical circumstances of his life—that is, the controversies with the judaizing Christians—but the genesis of the thought by which this word came to be identified with the truth he wished to set forth cannot be discovered. No previous use, no hint in the derivation of the word, suggests the association of it with that truth which St. Paul has joined to it, but there is no mistaking the fact. The thought stands out clear and sharp in his letters, and is the fundamental idea of his Christian consciousness. A thorough and exhaustive examination of the Apostle's writings would show how gradually the general and common uses of this word were superseded by this special use, and also that this growth in definiteness of expression kept pace with the development of his own Christian experience. The evolution of this higher and more concentrated form of expression reveals the intensity of his spiritual vision and spiritual life. While it is impossible to say why St. Paul uses this particular word to express the spiritual fact it is intended to state, yet the direct cause of his setting forth the truth in the particular form he did, rose out of his controversy with the Judaisers. The emphasis which he had laid upon faith as the spirit of the inner life and the power of freedom for the soul, the indifference which he felt for the highly prized obligations of the Jewish law,

and the strong opposition which he displayed to their enforcement, involved him in strife with his countrymen. He was consequently compelled to go deeper into the elements of salvation, or, at least, work out into clearer and more definite expression his conception of the salvation which was offered to man in Christ, and the means by which it might become the vital force in his living. The ground of this higher or, at least, more advanced thought of faith has no dogmatic basis, but is rooted in his personal experience of Christ and the work wrought in his soul by him. The two poles of his thought are Christ and the human soul, and in the unity of these is salvation for man.

This unity may be looked on from either side—Christ living and acting in the man, which is salvation; the man living and acting in Christ, which is faith (Rom. viii. 9 ff.; Gal. ii. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 5; Col. iii. 11; 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. iii. 27). He is never willing to separate these two inseparable factors, but defines the subjective state—the apprehension of Christ—as the vital principle of the life within, as faith. The danger which already existed in the ordinary thought of faith, that it might be regarded as a substitute for the works of the law, and to that extent, at least, as an act of righteousness deserving merit, was, by this extension and elevation of the idea of faith, completely avoided. This subtle shifting of the old objectionable character of the legal conception of religion over to the new spiritual life of the Gospel—a process which has taken place again

and again, and which has so firmly entrenched itself in the Christian Church that it is not even recognized—could not have occurred, had not the higher thought of the Apostle failed to be grasped. This perhaps was inevitable, the result of conditions which could not be overcome ; but one needs to realize not only the successes but the failures of the past, and some of these were vital. The value and superiority of faith did not lie in it as a human act which was higher and better than any other act which was purely external, or even of any other act whatsoever, but in the fact that by that word was expressed the union of the soul with Christ which had in it a power and perfection nowhere else to be found. This sublime mysticism had its warrant in itself. His own spiritual experience was the source of all that he set forth. The fulness of his ideal he never reached, but the foundations of it were laid in what had been the awful crisis of his own history, and in the deepest passions of his own soul. Out of this union with Christ rose the stream of a new and broader life full of the life and freedom of God. This life is the life of sonship in God through Christ. This sonship is the highest ideal that the human soul has ever had held before it, either as an object of desire or attainment.

Without entering into any further examination of the Jewish theology in which St. Paul was trained, it is sufficient only to note the fact that this was not a new thought to the Jew. His right and title to this position he grounded, not on any spiritual

relation, but on heredity and descent. As sons of Abraham they belonged to the chosen race. The purely physical conception was doubtless modified in the minds of the more spiritual by a perception that the character of Abraham was a factor in the election, and that the true relationship had its essence in spiritual resemblance. But the crude, broad statement of the popular mind was more fitted to gain assent, because involving less self-examination and a less spiritual self-consciousness than the other. The profound revolution in St. Paul's soul was so entirely spiritual in its nature and causes, that it was impossible that the old formulas by which men expressed their relations to God should any longer be satisfactory without a reinterpretation. The new life in Christ led to a re-reading of all man's spiritual relations, and emphasized the spiritual aspect of his life to the almost entire exclusion of the historical elements of the past. The new thought of sonship was to the old as the substance is to the shadow or as the soul to the body. The former was but a mere anticipation or, if you please, misconception which was correctly interpreted in the life of faith in Christ. The forensic mode of regarding the spiritual relations of man, which had such a large place in the legal mind of the Jew, undoubtedly left very distinct traces in the language of St. Paul, but that it was more in language than in thought can be seen in such passages as 2 Cor. v. 21 and Phil. iii. 9. The clearest evidence is that the merely legal sonship of

the Hebrew race is exchanged for a living spiritual fellowship of all mankind with God through faith in Christ. In the remarkable 8th chapter of Romans, in which St. Paul develops the idea of sonship, he asserts for every Christian soul, or for every soul that is led by the spirit of God, the absolute title of a son of God. That he considers this title anything but the adoption of a previous phrase or a mere literary circumlocution, he declares in proclaiming these sons "Heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him" (Rom. viii. 16–18). The spiritual character and spiritual privileges of Jesus Christ are claimed as the inheritance of the children of God through union with Christ. It may be said that this is the culmination of St. Paul's thought of the revelation of Jesus Christ as related to human character and its destiny. Man cannot be more than this. The Christian cannot be less, or accept less as his right. Against this spiritual self-consciousness, which realizes and affirms itself with such passionate joy and gratitude, nothing shall be allowed to stand. The Son is in the immediate presence of the Father. The more this relation was entered into, the more fully the power of it was felt, and in the slight change in the language we see how the Apostle had felt in his soul the full flood of light and life which came to him in the revelation of the fatherly love. The full tenderness of God's love, and the perfect happiness of the human soul, is shown in the new term which he uses, '*τέκνον*,'

'child.' Protection and obedience, love and trust, are the reciprocal feelings expressed by this word. Nestling tenderness and confiding love with the uplifted eye of trust is the picture which the word suggests, and it sprang out of his own inner life. The divinest and most sacred relation of the common life of man is made a type or image of that higher life which belongs to the soul in God.

To such a child who had attained to the true knowledge of the character of God by Christ, nothing could be of such high promise as the common inheritance with Christ of what God might give to him, whatever that inheritance might be. To be like Christ in all spiritual opportunities and endowments was the highest conception of the possible attainments of the child of God.

"The liberty of the glory of the children of God" as the final aim and goal of the revelation of God to man, hung like a vision before the tired eyes of the Apostle, and brought peace to the heart which was vexed and torn by the incessant strifes and controversies of men who could not grasp the profound and revolutionary meaning of the religious life which the revelation of Jesus Christ introduced. Absolute spiritual freedom, the freedom of Christ himself, was as much the essence of sonship, as sonship itself was the realization of the relation of the soul to God in Christ. To limit it or restrict it by any other laws than those of the spirit of Christ was to destroy it and reduce it to a mere phrase. It was the intense reality and actual correspondence with facts, the

spiritual facts of man's history, which in St. Paul's mind constitute the truth of the Gospel. It is this spiritual character and likeness which the revelation of Christ meant, and which it realized also. Why then hesitate? To qualify it or dilute it in accordance with the timidity of human nature or the traditional prescriptions of men, was a thing St. Paul would not tolerate for an instant. In the fierce struggles which the Judaisers brought about in the Church of Galatia, this same question arose and was answered in just this way. The law of the life of Christ is the only law which rules in the Christian life, and this not by obligation but by inner volition, for he too, as his Redeemer was, is a son of God. The fearlessness and the fulness with which St. Paul claims this title for those redeemed by Christ must have its ground in no theoretical perceptions or in abstract considerations, but in the realization in his own soul of the truth and power of this fact. The boundless horizon of the life of the soul in God is defined only by the life of the Son of God Himself. The energy and moving cause of that life as seen revealed in the individual is God. Its object and aim is the fulness and perfection of Christ's life.

When we retrace the path over which we have passed in search of the elements of St. Paul's ideal of life, and the means by which it is to be realized, we find at its very foundation a profound moral seriousness. The awful sense of God's holiness is not lessened but deepened by the revelation of Jesus Christ. This produces a spiritual self-abasement

and a profound sense of spiritual evil. This deep consciousness of sin and evil has always stood in the way of, and barred the path against, any vague Pantheism which has had such an attraction for so many spiritually-minded men. Out of and above this personal insufficiency rose the sense of Christ's greatness and Christ's sufficiency. The splendour of his person swept all other things out of the horizon. The law disappeared. Christ being the centre of the soul's life through faith, there were no limitations or restrictions to the spiritual growth and freedom of man except the ethical laws of Christ's personality and the spiritual conditions of his obedience to the will of God, which are all expressed in Love. This implied—nay, was—Sonship. This meant a Gospel, not for the Jew, but for Man. This distinctive feature of the external history of the Gospel—that is, its Universalism—has seemed to some to be one of the elements which St. Paul derived from the Hellenistic influences around him.[1] But if the foregoing pages have in any way approached the path along which St. Paul walked, it is clear that his universalism was not a result of his Hellenistic culture, but the outcome of his new spiritual experience. It sprang from his personal conviction that in Christ there was neither "Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all."[2]

[1] Pfleiderer, *Urchristenthum*, S. 175.

[2] Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der Neutestamentliche Theologie*, B. ii. S. 205.

Out of his own spiritual experience, and through the changes wrought in his nature by the living Lord, came the consciousness of sonship to God. This ideal of the Christian life, the ideal of a son of God, had in it the power of an endless life and the promise of an evolution and development of human history and human character which could not be prescribed or defined, but whose goal was the life of God in Jesus Christ.

It may be, and it has been said, that there never have been any Christians, either past or present, after the type and model of St. Paul.[1] In all the complexity of its elements and the variety of its expression doubtless this is true, but so far as the fundamental and essential principles are concerned, they prove their right and establish their claim through the character which they developed. So far as regards the practical ideal of the Apostle, we feel that we know what it was. The question is, Did the Church follow him, or did it form a practical ideal of its own? Was this ideal higher or lower than that of St. Paul? In the days that followed we shall see how far the thoughts of St. Paul moved the men who came after him; how they grasped the problems which human life in the presence of Christ revealed; how far they understood and accepted that spiritual idealism, with its eternal foundation in the holiness of God, its wide horizon in the liberty of Christ, and its lofty aim in the sonship of God—

[1] "Paulin. Christen im strengen Sinne des Wortes, hat es weder in alter noch in neuer Zeit gegeben."—Holtzmann, B. ii. S. 205.

an idealism which saw in the primary factors in the growth of the human soul, aside from its own self-consciousness, only the life and love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. These are great questions which belong to the present, perhaps, as much as to the past. It is with a view to help somewhat towards the solution of these questions that the following pages have been written.

CHAPTER II

THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS AND JUSTIN MARTYR

It is generally recognized that the aim of St. Paul was to separate Christianity from Judaism and establish it on an independent foundation. There seems to have been no other Jewish mind bold enough to grasp this idea of a religion independent of law, and consequently the establishment of the heathen Christianity is due to St. Paul. But the principles which underlay and prompted this separation and independent establishment were not understood at that day, and they have been only partially understood since.[1] The great crisis in the history of the Jewish race, the fall of Jerusalem, undoubtedly contributed materially to this end. It scattered the members of the young Christian Church, and broke the power of that spell which was exercised by those scenes which are among the most sacred and touching to the Christian heart. The traditions and teachings of the Church in Jerusalem, which under other circumstances might

[1] J. Draeseke, *Der Brief an Diognetos*, S. 117.

have exercised a powerful and prevailing influence upon the fortunes of the Gospel, ceased to be of any great importance, so far at least as an active influence was concerned, after this critical event. The history of the Gospel was now to feel the influence of the two great races which, with the Jewish, divide the interest of the student of Christian history—the Greek and the Roman.

We have seen how the education and blood of the Jew of Tarsus affected the way in which he apprehended and interpreted the most awful fact of his experience. We need to understand how other men of different training, with different blood in their veins and different thoughts in their brains, interpreted for themselves and for their fellow-men this same divine life revealed to them. This interpretation was influenced by a thousand causes of which we must remain in absolute ignorance, but here and there we can get a glimpse into the heart and life of a man which tells us something of the hidden forces which were moving that long-past world. The story of the first years of the new history among the races which lay outside the Jewish world is of deepest interest. Materials for a satisfactory narrative are almost absolutely lacking. What we have is so scanty, and the story is broken by such long pauses, that one hesitates at almost every step. Silence and darkness hang over many years, and occasional glimpses only show us how the changeless and unceasing processes of life and history are working there, as always, in the life of

man. Many difficult problems of church history have their solution buried there in the changes which came with the years after the death of St. Paul up to the middle of the second century. The writings which belong to the intermediate period are of the greatest value, and yet the conclusions which they suggest are always subject to revision.

The three most important authors whose writings have been preserved to us from those early days have been highly prized, as they should be, and greatly admired. Yet nothing is more striking than the contrast between the writings of the Apostles and those of Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp. The chasm is enormous, and it is due probably to the exceedingly scanty material of this period, which gives a greater value to the little we have, that they have been ranked so high. These Apostolic Fathers are unquestionably good men, and have many high and noble qualities; but that they are great men in the sense in which we apply that term to St. Paul or St. John, no one at all familiar with their writings would contend.[1] It is even questionable, or at least worthy of discussion, whether they represent the highest intelligence and character even of those days. Writers on the early days of Christianity are fond of showing how the Gospel began with the lowest and most ignorant, and seem to conclude

[1] "Man glaubt es kaum, dass man hier Männer vor sich hat, die bei jenen grossten Meistern in die Schule gegangen sein sollen, oder doch der unsprünglichen Quelle so nahe standen."—Thomasius, *Christlich. Dog.*, B. i. S. 35.

that it was only gradually that it reached what are called the upper or cultivated classes. Yet evidence is not wanting that in some localities even in the lifetime of St. Paul many earnest and thoughtful persons, and presumably therefore also cultivated and intelligent ones, were profoundly influenced by the Gospel. No one can read the Epistle to the Romans, for instance, and feel that those to whom the Apostle wrote were all, or even a large part of them, ignorant and uncultivated. Many persons calling themselves intelligent in the present day find considerable difficulty in following and grasping the thought of this great letter. Yet St. Paul wrote to be understood, and the existence of the letter shows that it was understood and highly prized. But when we ask ourselves what is represented by the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, we find something in every way inferior to St. Paul. The plainness and simplicity of their natures are manifest in the solid, earnest, and practical manner in which they apprehend the Gospel. An exception, however, should be made in the case of Ignatius, who is fairly blazing with emotion and zeal. But even about this enthusiasm there is something lacking. The new enthusiasm for Christ asks no questions and sees no problems. The attitude of these early believers towards Christ seems to be one of love, admiration, and obedience. Towards their fellow-Christians it is one of frank loving-kindness and genuine unselfishness.

The picture of those early days is very simple,

sweet, and beautiful. Their thoughts do not seem to run beyond the simplest application of the duties which spring out of their love for Christ. We catch a glimpse here and there of the beginnings of the struggles that another generation was to be plunged into, but, for the most part, the little brotherhood was living in the quiet joy and peace of its new-found Lord. No world-wide struggles, no far-reaching contests, no deep speculations, trouble the little bands which live out their lives, unnoticed by the world, waiting for the coming of their Lord. There is no effort, or only the slightest, made to give any intellectual statement of the problems solved by Christ's appearing. What He was to them was something different from what He was to their successors. Their hearts were touched and softened by His appeal, and they took up their burdens and tasks in life content to do them, inspired only by their love for Him. Their eyes were fixed on Him, and they sought to follow in His footsteps. It was but the dawn of the day. The dew of the morning lay on the grass, and the songs of thanksgiving rose up over the hills telling of the deep joy of the hearts of men. The peace of the new day was over their world. The shepherd, leading his flock on the mountain side or in the cool shadows of the evening, mused of the Good Shepherd who had led him out of darkness into light, and the eternal peace of heaven fell upon his dreaming soul. The poor toiler in the city heard a voice telling him of the Father's House, where the wicked cease from troubling and the

weary are at rest. His life was full of the new hope and the new message, and he was content, in silence and poverty, to wait God's will. Persecutions were not wanting to these strange dreamers, but persecutions were but the prelude of that Great Day of the Lord which eager hearts expected. The little brotherhood, from its more or less secret meetings, looked out upon an hostile world. There was no great Church with its great questions and profound struggles and mixed results. All the writings of this period are, generally speaking, of the simplest and most practical nature. The ideal is an ethical one, and not the spiritual or religious one which moved St. Paul. The teachings of these Fathers are directed principally to the morality, and not the theology, of the Gospel. Speculation has only just appeared on the horizon, and they fear it. Even the language of St. Paul, though generally used and apparently quite familiar, is obviously not understood.[1] It cannot be said that theology and speculation found absolutely no place in the life of the Christian communities of this age, for the writings of St. Paul show that the germs of many of the later forms of thought were already planted. What can be fairly said, however, is that the literature which belongs to the first decades of the second century is almost exclusively ethical and practical, and the forms of thought are of the simplest and most primitive nature.

The absence of the theological or dogmatic note from the Christian literature of the first half of the

[1] Lightfoot, *Clement of Rome*, vol. i. p. 397.

second century is perfectly obvious, and is admitted by all who have been careful students of that period. Those who have sought to minimize the effect of this on the judgment of the history call attention to the fact that the greater part of this literature has a different object in view from that which was aimed at by the later writers, and that consequently the absence of dogmatic language is no evidence that theological ideas were not as much a part of the Christian thought of that age as of later ones. Yet it is very curious that no such trend of thought appears in this generation, and more curious that if it did exist it did not find an expression. A man need not be writing on theology to show the presence of theological speculation in the atmosphere in which he lives. The most profoundly practical thought is based upon intellectual and spiritual conceptions which are most easily recognized. The scantiness of material in this instance does not by any means invalidate the argument *ex silentio*, and in few cases does it seem to have firmer grounds than in the present. The fact is, the more the literature of this period is studied, the more clear does it become that a wide intellectual chasm lies between the great teacher who is justly called the founder of Gentile Christianity and those who were his spiritual children. The peculiar form of Christian thought which we call Paulinism belongs unquestionably to St. Paul alone. Those who follow in point of time most closely after him bear very slight traces only of his influence, and this chiefly or only in the way of the

survival of certain phrases or echoes of his language, which are differently understood, and therefore must be differently interpreted. It is not the isolated passage which defines the mind of a writer, but its relation to the context and the whole body of his thought. This manifest divergence of the later writers of the early Church from St. Paul has been most variously explained. It has been contended, on the one hand, that the Universalism, which is such a characteristic note of Gentile Christianity, is directly derived from the Universalism of St. Paul. But the evidence seems to be lacking, and with our present knowledge of the life of the Empire at this date, we may say that Universalism was in the air, and was the natural and inevitable form under which the Gospel would be apprehended by an heathen Christian. On the other hand, it has been claimed by a very distinguished scholar that the entire absence of Pauline ideas in the post-Pauline Christianity is evidence that to the heathen mind the ideas which were derived from his Jewish training, and which undoubtedly lay behind and beneath his Christian expression, were foreign to their education and temperament, and therefore entirely unintelligible to them. This incapacity naturally made St. Paul's language and thoughts less effective in shaping their Christian living and thinking than the constant recurrence of the Pauline phrases would lead one to think.[1] Not having been trained in Rabbin-

[1] A. Ritschl, *Entstehung der Altkatolische Kirche*, Zweite Auflage, S. 282.

ical thought, it was not likely they would fully grasp the meaning of St. Paul's references to antecedent ideas. Yet, while this is entirely true, it is not all the truth, for there are other elements in the problem, and other causes at work, to explain the fact which all historians recognize. One of the latest attempts to substantiate the theory that the Pauline theology, though in a modified form, had much to do with the formation of Catholic theology, can only make itself good by such violent and arbitrary analyses and re-arrangements of the early literature, that one wonders whether this 'Deutero Paulinismus' is not, after all, a 'Pseudo Paulinismus.'[1] But to ascertain more correctly the exact relation of St. Paul to this age, it is necessary to ascertain upon what basis this Hellenic Christianity stood, and to study more closely some questions which, though apparently somewhat remote from the main current of this examination, are yet in reality very closely connected with it, and throw considerable light upon the rather obscure path we have to follow.

We need to define as carefully as possible the position of the Pauline literature down to Justin Martyr, and gather together the evidence of its use scattered through that period. A further and more important matter is to ascertain what, if any, influence was exerted by it. This involves an investigation into the history of the Canon, which will be made as brief as possible. In order to understand something of the relation of that literature, which holds such a

[1] O. Pfleiderer, *Urchristenthum*, S. 647.

prominent place in the Christian world of to-day, to the age which we are studying, it is necessary to place oneself, as far as possible, in the mental and spiritual attitude of the Christians of that remote past. Two things stand out with peculiar clearness—first, the vivid expectation which is so constantly reappearing of the immediate coming of the Lord; and secondly, the intense consciousness which the Christian communities had of their own inspiration. All the literature proceeding from a Christian source was considered to be inspired, and established itself in the regard and use of some of the Christian communities. Yet the sense in which this inspiration was felt can easily be misunderstood. The literary character of the writings did not have any influence in their acceptance. This element of superiority, which is characteristic of what we now regard as the canonical writings, was something which did not appeal to them; and the value of this literature, *as such*, seems to play no part in its preservation. A community standing facing, as it thought, the end of the world and the great climax of human history, would not have any very high literary instincts developed. Rather, as we would judge from the literature of the early part of the second century which has survived, there was no literary instinct or feeling of any apparent strength. And when it did appear, it proceeded in almost every case from what was regarded as heretical sources.[1]

[1] H. J. Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der Historisch Kritischen Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, S. 93.

In addition to this, the early Christians were less disposed to feel the lack of what might be called a distinctively Christian literature having its source and origin in definite Christian authority, from the fact that there was already a literature at hand which supplied all their wants. It has been said that "All religions tend to become religions of a Book," so in the very beginning of the Christian history the eyes of the Christians in every locality were directed with special reverence to the S.S. of the Jewish Church. The necessary limitation which their original Hebrew character would have placed upon their use by unlearned and ignorant men was broken through by the Greek translation of Alexandria, and in their Greek form, which for many years was the only one familiar to any of the Christian writers, the Christian communities found their 'Sacred Literature.' The method of interpretation, which was the popular one in use, not only among Palestinian and Alexandrian Jews, but also the one universally adopted by all heathen writers in their effort to readjust the ancient literature to the new movement in the spiritual progress of the Imperial races, was that of Allegorism. So interpreted, the Old Testament became a terrible weapon in the hands of the Christians against the Jews themselves. It was reread and reinterpreted. It was no longer a Jewish but a Christian book, and the Jews were denied all claim to it. The new and peculiar form in which it presented itself to the Christian was that the peculiar and purely Jewish element was now regarded as

merely episodical, so to speak, and the Christian element was regarded as the real contents of the book. Not all which the Old Testament contained was, it is true, regarded as Christian, but all Christian truth was contained in it.[1] The Christians applied all the promises of the Old Testament to themselves as the true Israelites.[2] As it had been 'The Book' to the Jew, so it became 'The Book' to the Christian; and all the writers of the first half of the second century, when they use the phrase 'S.S.' or 'Holy S.S.,' mean exclusively the Old Testament. The allegorical system of interpretation, which enabled them to expel the Jew from his literary birthright and give a purely Christian interpretation to it, produced a more vehement attachment to it among heathen Christians than one would suppose. Yet the use which they made of it shows their almost absolute ignorance of its true character and relation to the Gospel. It may be asserted, with almost no qualification, that there is not a Christian writer of the second century whose theory of interpretation and exegesis is not beneath contempt.

Notwithstanding the place which the Old Testament occupied in the minds of the Christians, there were differences of no slight importance which gradually emerged into view as certain tendencies began to develop themselves more fully, and gained more distinct expression. To the Jewish Christian,

[1] L. Diestal, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments in der Christliche Kirche*, 28.

[2] *Dial. Trypho*, 12, 125.

from the point of view of religious literature, the Old Testament was everything, and standing upon this ground he looked upon the Gospel itself as simply a more distinct expression and re-enforcement of Judaism. Christianity then being merely supplemental, the natural movement of thought limited itself to the elaboration and definition of Judaism as already given in the Old Testament, while the exclusively Christian element seemed to play a very subordinate part. The supreme sacredness of their Scriptures permitted no compromise, and caused all other literature to sink into insignificance beside it. But there were others, perhaps excited through opposition, perhaps following a natural tendency and bent of their minds, who saw in the two great religious forces, Judaism and Christianity, not identity and continuation, but opposition and revolution. And the necessity of a distinctive Christian literature was most clearly apprehended. But though these two extremes existed and affected the Church both for good and evil by their exaggerations, the main body of Christians through the early part of this period regarded the Old Testament as the only S.S., although in each locality there were, as we know, writings of Christian teachers read in the meetings for public worship of the brotherhood. What these writings were, depended very much on local circumstances. The writings of those teachers whom they had known and loved, or who had been associated with them in some special way, would naturally be highly prized. In the early part of the

second century this seems about all that can be said. The evidence which the literature of this age offers seems to bear out this statement without any qualifications. The first passage which seems to be a reference to the Gospels as S.S. occurs in the Epistle to Barnabas, c. 4. The language is that of Matt. xxii. 14, and would seem to show that already, in the beginning of the second century, there was a recognized Christian literature with what we would now call canonical authority. But the most careful critics reject this inference, and in this language discover a quotation common to St. Matthew and Barnabas, which each had found in general use or had taken from some earlier authority.[1]

Clement of Rome, in the Epistle recognized as his, seems to have no idea of a distinctively Christian literature with canonical authority. He, as all the others, uses language which shows its evangelical origin, and also refers to St. Paul; but the absence of the feeling of authority, in the later sense, is conspicuous. It has been affirmed by the highest authority in our language on these writers, that there is no evidence that either Clement, Ignatius, or Polycarp recognized any Canon of the New Testament.[2] In his great work on the Ignatian Epistles he says, "The expression, 'It is written,' (γεγραπται) is employed to introduce quotations from

[1] This is the opinion of Bishop Lightfoot, and has also been urged by J. Weiss, *Der Barnabasbrief*, S. 109. Conf. A. Hilgenfeld, *Historisch-Kritische Einleitung*, S. 38–39.

[2] Lightfoot, *Clement of Rome*, vol. i. p. 9.

the Old Testament alone." . . . . "There is not so much as a single reference to written evangelical records, such as the 'Memoirs of the Apostles,' which occupy so large a place in Irenæus."[1] As the result of his examination of the Epistle of Polycarp, he says, "The evangelical quotations are still introduced as in Clement of Rome, with the formula, 'The Lord said.'"[2]

One passage in Pol. xii. at first sight suggests a different conclusion, but Bishop Lightfoot does not attach much importance to it, and suggests a reference in it to the Old Testament. In such a primitive state of things one would not expect to find the Epistles of St. Paul occupying a higher place than the evangelical narratives, and there is no evidence that they did. On the contrary, the material points in the other direction. In the Ignatian Epistles there is the fullest proof that the writer was acquainted with several of them, although "He never directly quotes any one."[3] And the Epistle of Polycarp is in the same key. "The passages from the Apostolic Epistles are still for the most part indirect and anonymous; not a single book of the New Testament is cited by name."[4] In the 2 Epis. Clem. there is an evident advance which we should expect with the later date of the writer.[5] He speaks of "the Bible," which is evidently the Old Testament

[1] "Apostolic Fathers," part ii.; *S. Ignatius*, vol. i. p. 388.
[2] § 2; *Ibid.*, p. 577.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 389. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 577.
[5] Lightfoot adopts 120–140 A.D.; Harnack, 130–150 A.D.

and "The Apostles" (§ 14), and in chapters vi. and xiii. he appears to recognize the "Gospels" as Holy S., but there is no reference to St. Paul in any way which would establish his writings on the same basis of authority. He even does not mention him, although it is possible that he was acquainted with some of his writings. It is not necessary, however, to assume that these early writers represent more than the prevailing opinion in their own localities. The close union and strong uniformity which is so characteristic of later ages were not features of this.

In the writings of Justin Martyr we find "Memoirs of the Apostles" referred to as a class of writings having high authority. It is possible that these are the Gospels which we now have, or the documents from which these were formed, for we know that there was a large amount of evangelical literature of the most varied character. St. Luke refers to existing material in his day which was the basis of his own work. Yet the authority which these writings possessed is peculiar and different from that of any other. There were two reasons which gave weight to these memoirs of the Apostles—first, the Apostles were the 'Eye and Ear Witnesses' of the things described, and consequently were a court of last appeal as to matters of fact concerning the evangelical history; secondly, their writings contained the recognized and undisputed words of our Lord. Consequently it was the narrative which gave them weight, and not the personal

authority of the writers.[1] The account we have of the Diatessarion of Tatian shows that even after the middle of the second century there was no special sanctity attached to the words themselves of the four Gospels, otherwise he would not have attempted to make one which should, if not supersede, at least have certain advantages over the existing Gospels. Its long-continued and wide-spread use in the Syrian Church shows the absence of any strictly defined views on the matter. And as late as the beginning of the fourth century the Syrian Church used a New Testament which contained, instead of the four Gospels, the Diatessarion of Tatian, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Pauline Epistles, including the Apocryphal Epistles. And it has been conjectured that originally the Syrian Canon consisted only of the Diatessarion and the Old Testament.[2]

As has been said, the conversion of the Old Testament into a Christian book naturally weakened the importance of, or the necessity for, a distinctly Christian literary authority or court of appeal except as to matters of fact. The profound consciousness of the immediate inspiration of the Christian brotherhood led naturally to the acceptance of the idea that inspiration was a present fact, and also to only

[1] "It was not the authority of the Gospels so much as the authority of the Gospel history which led the Fathers to use them and defer to them."—Theo. Zahn, *Geschichte des Neutestamentliche Kanons*, S. 482.

[2] Harnack, *Das Neue Test. um das Jahr* 200, S. 105, 108.

one division in the literature of the Church—that is, the Old Testament and the Christian writings as a whole, with a preference for the Gospels on the grounds already stated. It is only in the flood tide of the Gnostic movement that we see the Church beginning to recognize the importance of these subjects, and that they begin to come sharply into view. And yet the impulse which led to their discussion is not always plain. The rapid spread of the Gospel and the decay of the first high enthusiasm naturally lowered the tone of the Christian communities, and the first glimpse of the dazzling vision of world conquest did nothing to restore it. Historical and philosophical problems came into view, and the age of reflection followed the age of emotion as the natural course of history. The philosophical discussions within the Christian sphere of influence had much to do with bringing the subject of the new Canon into the foreground, and developed the need for a specifically Christian literary authority. The first impulse, however, probably came from Marcion, and in a somewhat less degree from Valentinus and the more sober school of distinctly Christian Gnostics. So long as there were survivors of the Apostolic Age, those who had learned from the lips of the first Christian teachers themselves, the writings of these teachers would have only a limited influence, but as time passed these literary survivals increased greatly in value in the circle where they first were received. The widely scattered Christian bodies drew together

according to geographical and national lines, as was done later on a larger scale when the uniting bond of the Empire was loosened and shattered, and in these more closely allied Churches we perceive certain literary inheritances and traditions spreading their influence. It is from this point of view that we draw toward the consideration of the Epistles of St. Paul. The moment we consider the reasons in which they had their origin, and those which would contribute to their preservation, we can readily see that they occupied a far different position naturally from the Old Testament and also the Gospels. This Pauline literature is, in the first place, simply a series of letters having no unity except authorship and a common purpose. They are, in a sense, unique in their position. Letters, under any circumstances, are not regarded as the form in which Divine Revelation would naturally express itself, and the occasional nature, the very causes which inspired them and the purposes which dictated them, would give them a local and temporary character not apparently suited to meet the demands for an absolute authority. They seemed for the present only, not the future. The process by which they grew in dignity and importance seems easy to conjecture in the absence of positive evidence to that effect. The single congregations which possessed a letter from the Apostle would naturally cherish it on account of association, and in the course of time the Churches which were grouped in a particular district would exchange such letters as they had,

and gradually a collection would be formed. Yet we must not forget how difficult it would be at this period of history to form a literary collection of any kind, and how inevitably these collections would vary, the one from the other, even with the strongest common impulse behind them. The manuscripts in which the ancient writings were preserved were in rolls, and in all probability each Epistle of the Apostle was in a separate roll in these collections, as we know it was in the beginning. To have anything like a complete collection of the various documents which were highly prized in the Churches of different localities would be almost impossible, not only on account of the labour and expense involved, but because such a collection implies a state of things which did not exist in the second century. It would, of course, be out of the question for many of the smaller and more remote communities to have any but the most fragmentary literary relics of the earlier days.

To distinguish the various groups of Pauline Epistles, as has been attempted, seems rather hazardous. There may have been, and probably was, a collection made in the Churches of Asia Minor and also a group held in high esteem in the Churches of Greece, but there is absolutely no evidence of any value to prove this.[1] How early this grouping, if there was such, took place we have no means of

[1] Zahn thinks that the three Epistles—Philippians, 1 and 2 Thess.—formed a group by themselves called "The Macedonian," *Geschichte des Neutestamentliche Kanons*, S. 816.

ascertaining. Zahn thinks that the first two groups probably existed before 120 A.D. and not later than 125 A.D., but there are no facts upon which one can rest a positive conclusion. The fact is, that questions about the present canonical writings do not come into view with any prominence until we reach the Marcionite controversy. A complete and reliable list of writings which were in use in the Christian communities of the first half of the second century, and the exact relation which they sustained to the common Christian life, cannot now be fixed. There is evidence which goes to show that in addition to the writings with which we are familiar, many others were also held in great esteem. Marcion had his peculiar Gospel, as also Basilides and the later Valentinians. Some critics have even gone so far as to assert that each district, each diocese, and almost each school or group read a Gospel which had become familiar to it. Each considered that it had the right to regard its Gospel as the current and authoritative one. Marcion and his followers so acted, and they were not the only ones.[1] Out of this uncertainty the Church slowly emerged, and the Canon of the New Testament was built up, but, as the subsequent history shows, it was by a process of sifting and selection, and not simply of collection and addition. This process was first stimulated by the need the Church felt to defend itself against the arbitrary methods of Marcion and others. The growing

[1] Usener, *Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, Erster Theil, S. 96, 97.

power and the increase in numbers had lowered the general tone of the Church life and provoked a reaction. The legal tendencies of the current religious interpretations made the Old Testament and the Gospel practically identical in their teaching, although not in the details of their contents. Christianity was the 'New Law,' while Judaism was the 'Old.' The distinction between the 'Old' and the 'New' was becoming slighter with every new effort to emphasize the unity of revelation against the antinomians, until this apparent confusion and identity was violently assailed, and the separation between the two was so rudely emphasized by Marcion, that the two, the 'Old' and the 'New,' no longer represented two stadia in the process of revelation, but the manifestation of opposing and conflicting forces. Marcion was the protest against the legalizing of Christianity, but although he realized the truth, he was unable to see it in its true relations, and he missed the point through false exaggeration and misinterpretation of the historical relations between the Old and the New Dispensations. The motive of his career must not be found in an intellectual desire to erect a system which should distinguish the author and solve some of the great problems which then pressed for solution, but in the practical object of restoring the Gospel to its original form and freshness. His position is distinctly that of a reformer rather than that of a theologian, and he was the first one to recognize that the Christianity of his day was in any way distinguished from that of the beginning. This appeal of his to

the past meant inevitably an appeal to something more than tradition, for as yet there is no evidence that tradition was a recognized authority. The one whom Marcion selected as an authority was St. Paul, the reasons which influenced him in this choice being probably sympathy with the tone of his writings and a perception that they contained the most powerful means of correcting the abuses which had become prevalent, but most of all from a deep religious interest. That which moved him most was the recognition in St. Paul of the same contrast which he had found in himself between the redeeming grace in Christ and the course of nature and the world's history.[1] The response which he found in St. Paul to his own deepest and most passionate experiences made the Apostle an authority for him such as he had probably been to few before. The Epistles of St. Paul thus became the basis for him of a sacred literature, for, having rejected with scorn the writings of the Old Testament, which the Church at large accepted as its Canon, he was driven by sheer necessity, as well as inclination, to find a basis in the past in the writings of the Apostle. It cannot be dogmatically asserted that this was in the strictest sense of the word the first definite beginnings of a Canon. It appears, however, from all the evidence, that it began first among the Gnostics.[2] But one of the keenest of modern critics expressly declares that it is impossible

[1] Zahn, *Geschichte des Neut. Kanons*, S. 586.

[2] Eusebius, *E. H.*, iv. 7, 7.

to decide whether Basilides, Valentinus, or Marcion first grasped the idea of a Christian Canon, but that many things point to Marcion.[1]

Whether it was Basilides, Valentinus, or Marcion who first developed the idea of a New Testament

[1] Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, B. i. S. 187. Prof. Sanday, in his recent work, *Inspiration*, The Bampton Lectures for 1893, takes the year 200 A.D. as the most suitable date to start from in the study of the question of the N. T. Canon. Beginning with that date he moves backward, carrying with him the ideas and assumptions of that age into the preceding one. In his attack upon the theory of Prof. Harnack, he finds all his material subsequent to the period, the ideas of which are in dispute. All the quotations which he gives in order to prove the status of the N. T. literature about the year 150 A.D. belong to writers of the next generation—that is, from 180 A.D. onward. The argument seems to be this. That the ideas of a N. T. Canon could not have been wrought out in the Marcionite and Gnostic controversies of the middle of the second century can be proved from the fact that Irenæus, Theophilus, and others hold fully-developed opinions on this matter, and have a rather clearly wrought-out theory on the subject. This is regarded as conclusive evidence that just the same opinions were held in the year 150 when these writers were young men. But there is another explanation of this fact to which Prof. Sanday seems to have paid no attention. If the idea of a N. T. Canon received its first great impulse from the Marcionite controversy, and was wrought out in that stern struggle, two things would be apparent. The first, that the ideas then taking shape would be most firmly rooted in the mind of the generation which was then coming on the stage. The second fact which would strike the student would be that previous to this struggle these ideas would appear only in their most rudimentary form. Both of these facts are beyond dispute, and although it may be said that Prof. Harnack has not been able to fix the date of the canonical development beyond controversy, yet his hypothesis will still stand against attacks which do not bring any heavier weight of argument than that contained in Prof. Sanday's Bampton Lectures.

Canon is a matter of minor importance, but it was undoubtedly the Gnostic movement which forced the controversy and compelled the Church to make an effort to solve this question, and one is not likely to attribute too much importance to Marcion. The position and influence which St. Paul's writings held in the most distinguished Gnostic schools show very clearly that they were the first to recognize his importance in the formation of Christian ideas.

One great and almost insuperable difficulty in studying the Gnostic systems is that in no case have we a complete presentation of their ideas in their proper order and relation. Their writings have come down to us only in fragments and quotations, oftentimes distorted, and always through the medium of men who are at no pains to disguise their dislike or distinguish between the object and the methods of their opponents. The more earnest and powerful minds, like Valentinus for instance, did not have any intention of subverting the Gospel in favour of a pre-existing philosophical system which they had adopted, but in the shifting and formless state of Christian thought were endeavouring to give an intellectual and systematic shape to the contents of the Gospel. The impression which their efforts left upon the Church has, in this respect at least, been indelible. Regarded from this point of view, the position assigned to them by a recent critic states the case very clearly. "They are the first Christian theologians."[1]

[1] "So sind sie die ersten christlichen Theologen."—Harnack, *Dogmen.*, B. i. S. 188.

Their attitude towards St. Paul, judged even by the slight material we have, shows the high regard they entertained for him, and their position towards the other Apostles endowed them with new importance. The dispute which necessarily arose about the form and contents of their teaching compelled them to seek some justification in the past, and they appealed to the Apostles themselves as the authors and sources of their ideas. According to some authorities, Basilides and his son Isodorus traced their doctrine back to a secret tradition of St. Matthew, although Clement of Alexandria declares that Basilides had as his teacher Glaukias, an interpreter of St. Peter.[1] Valentinus also claimed to have received his doctrine from St. Paul himself through the mediation of Theodas, and the Ophites derived theirs from St. James through Mariamne.[2] The noticeable thing, however, is that all the schools, apparently without exception, used and quoted St. Paul's writings, especially in justification of their theory of a secret tradition coming from Christ Himself. He is their 'Classic Witness.'[3] Moreover, the appearance of certain favourite Gnostic terms gave his writings special importance in their eyes, such as 'πλήρωμα,' 'αἰῶνες,' and others. The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians were cited by all the schools, and 1 Corinthians was regarded as a com-

[1] A. Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte des Urchristenthum*, S. 202.

[2] H. J. Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der Historisch-Kritischen Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, S. 132.

[3] Zahn, S. 756.

plete justification of their division of men into the three classes of '*πνευματικοὶ*,' '*ψευκικοὶ*,' and '*ὑλικοὶ*'; and their theory of determinism was fortified by appeals to St. Paul. 1 Cor. xv. 50 in particular seemed to be a stumbling-block to the orthodox Christians. The phrase, "Whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate," has been called the 'Sword of Gnosticism.'[1] Many of the later problems of church theology appeared in the Gnostic discussions, and the questions which the language of St. Paul suggest with reference to God, Man, Predestination, Sin, Freewill, and Salvation were all taken up by them, and so treated as to present great difficulties to those who wished at once to oppose Gnosticism and yet save the name and authority of the great Apostle. Basilides speaks of inherited sin in very much the same way that Augustine did later in the history,[2] and the denial of freewill by the Gnostics undoubtedly provoked the counter assertion, especially as this seemed in harmony with morality and commonsense. Origen, in his *Commentary on Romans*, Liber V. i., tell us that Basilides quoted Rom. vii. 9 to prove his doctrine of transmigration. One may smile oftentimes at the exegesis of the Gnostics, but it was not much, if any, worse than that of many of the church writers of this age, and certainly the opponents of the Gnostics would have looked with as much disfavour upon the teachings of many of their successors as they did upon those of the

[1] Bigg, *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, p. 200.
[2] Harnack, B. i. S. 191.

Gnostic schools. The question as to the influence which this almost universal adoption of the Pauline literature by the Gnostic schools exercised upon the position which these writings held in the Church at this period, cannot, of course, be determined to any satisfactory degree. We know that the later controversy with the Montanists cast a shadow over the Apocalypse, and it was looked upon with extreme suspicion by writers whose orthodoxy was not questioned. Reasoning by analogy, we may assume that the constant appeals of the Gnostics to the authority of St. Paul would, together with the natural difficulties which present themselves in his writings, cause a slight neglect, and perhaps suspicion, of him. The evidence, however, is rather negative, and that drawn from analogy; yet this by no means necessarily weakens its value, for the lack of evidence in favour of an opposing view is sometimes the only, and therefore the strongest, argument which can be brought to bear to sustain the point intended.

An examination of the writings of the man who above all others is regarded as the Christian writer of the middle of the second century will show exactly how much or how little we can learn on this subject. The value of any writer as an index of his times does not consist in his originality or superiority, but in his sympathy with, and presentation of, the ideas and modes of thought most prevalent in his own generation.

If his ideas can be discovered running through the general course of thought subsequent to his own age, we are justified in assuming that they are the

common property of the Church, and not the special opinions of an individual who has to wait until the world overtakes him. Such a man who is the mouthpiece of his generation is not generally a great man or even a superior one. He may be only an opportune one, and we are to look upon his thought as representing the higher level of the thought of his age. Such a man was Justin the Martyr. His most ardent admirer would find difficulty in proving him to be a great man. Yet he was a man of education and experience. He had travelled far and seen much of the world. He knew his age, not as a prophet or poet knows his, but as a man of affairs with a serious purpose in life. He was born in Samaria about the last decade of the first century. He was educated in Greek philosophy, and had seen the greatest cities of the Empire. He came to Rome at a crisis in the history of the Church. His contemporaries there were Valentinus and Marcion. The former had come from Alexandria, and the latter from Asia Minor, drawn thither probably, as Justin was, by the irresistible attraction of the Imperial city. Both Valentinus and Marcion were extraordinary men, and Valentinus especially stimulated the higher thought of his day in a way that none of the later writers succeeded in doing until we reach Origen. He remained in Rome or its neighbourhood for twenty years.[1] Side by side with

[1] "He came to Rome 136–140 A.D., and remained there until the Bishopric of Anicetus, 155–156 A.D."—Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte*, S. 285.

him was Marcion, who first learned there from Cerdon those speculative ideas which have been his conspicuous defects in the eyes of all subsequent students, but which were in all probability only the occasion of that antagonism which his stern reforming spirit stirred up.

Had the Church been willing to adopt the cardinal truth of Marcion which lay beneath all his exaggerations, it would have been saved from the legalism into which it had already plunged, and the subsequent sacerdotal development would have been prevented. The fact also that Valentinus could teach his peculiar system of thought in the Imperial city for the best part of a generation without separating himself from the Church, shows that the elasticity of belief was considerably greater at this time than at subsequent periods; or, what is more probable perhaps, that definite lines had not yet been drawn on most of the subjects about which later ages were more rigid. Even some time later, when the Valentinians were recognized by that name, they made no effort to separate themselves from the Church, nor were they expelled. They lived within the fold, occupying the same position which has been occupied by so many since who have remained in the Church while outside of the popular and prevailing currents of thought and life within it. A few years after Justin came to Rome—that is, about 150 A.D.—Marcion issued his improved text of his *Evangelium* and *Apostolicum*. There is every reason to believe that in the great controversy then

waging Justin took a deep interest. In fact, we have preserved to us the title of a work written by him against Marcion. We know nothing, however, of the line taken by Justin in this work which would undoubtedly be a cardinal witness for the attitude of the mass of intelligent members of the orthodox party. When we examine the most important and authentic writings of Justin which we have at our command, the 1 and 2 Apologies and the Dialogue with Trypho with reference to a New Testament Canon, we discover that for him, as for his predecessors, and presumably for his contemporaries, the great Christian book of undoubted authority and inspiration is the Old Testament.

He regards the book as undoubtedly a Christian book, and denies any claim on the side of the Jews. He asserts a distinct repudiation of them, and finds the evidence in the fact of the existence of circumcision among them. This he regards as an undoubted indication that these people are not God's people; and more than that, that it is a sure sign of God's anger.[1] The Old Testament is for him the one supreme authority, and a curious light is thrown upon his position by the fact that he prefers the Septuagint translation and rejects the Hebrew version. This he does because he believes the latter was garbled and corrupted.[2]

The only need which he seems to feel for specifically Christian books is for those referring to the

[1] *Dial. Try.*, c. 16, 18.
[2] *Ibid.*, c. 71, 72, 73, and 74.

life of Christ, and he appeals to these under the title of "Memoirs of the Apostles," but nowhere attributes to them more than historical value. When the controversy with Marcion began, no doubt a new aspect was put upon the whole question, or, at least, the strain of the situation was intensified. The path Justin had to walk was a thorny one. In the early part of the second century the Gnostic teachers, or those so classed, were probably superior in intellectual power and culture to any the orthodox party could bring against them. Moreover, in the conflict with the two chief representatives then in Rome, Valentinus and Marcion, he was met by two methods which were exactly opposite, and yet which aimed at the same result. The end which Valentinus had in view of recommending his system he attained by the use of a theory of interpretation, by means of which all the difficulties which beset his path were explained away. The whole Gospel was allegorized, and the standing ground of the simple Christian seemed oftentimes to melt away into a cloud of abstractions. Marcion, on the other hand, cut the knot which he could not loosen, and rejected all the writings which offered any difficulties towards the establishment of his theory. Of course, had the present canonical writings been established upon their later basis of authority, Justin would have disposed of his adversaries without any difficulty; but, in the absence of his work against Marcion, we can only infer from his extant writings what his method was.

In relation to the Pauline Epistles, which is the

special subject of our investigation, a remarkable fact is to be noted, and that is, that in the writings of Justin which have survived, the name of St. Paul nowhere occurs.[1] The explanations of this fact have been various and interesting, if not satisfactory. The fact that Justin wrote against Marcion would necessarily imply, in the case at least of one who possessed the literary culture which Justin undoubtedly did, that he had a quite familiar acquaintance with the material which was the occasion of the strife. Yet why this singular omission in all his other writings? Three views only, with reference to this point, need occupy our attention.

I. That of Semisch, who thinks that Justin avoided the name of St. Paul in his Dialogue with Trypho out of consideration for the Jews among whom he was working, since to them the name of the Apostle would be particularly offensive.[2]

II. That of Weizsäcker, who does not regard the Dialogues as historical. The evidence for this judgment he finds in the fact that the Jew grants more in the Dialogue than in reality he thinks he would have done. In addition, he thinks that the account of his conversion can hardly be historically accurate.[3]

III. A later critic, A. Thoma, offers a more satis-

[1] Zahn finds a fragment of Justin, as he thinks, in Methodius, which has the name of St. Paul in connection with the Resurrection, but I have been unable to verify the reference.

[2] *Justin des Martyrer*, Zweiter Theil, S. 239.

[3] "Die Theologie des Martyrers Justinus," *Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie*, xii. S. 63.

factory argument perhaps than either, and one more in accordance with the facts as they appear in other writings of this period, when he says that the Pauline writings were not regarded as authoritative—that is, as Holy Scripture *par excellence*[1]—and, as a consequence, were not quoted by him in this controversy.

Yet the writings of Justin are full of echoes and reminiscences of the Pauline Epistles, and if the assumption that he had studied them previous to his reply to Marcion seems to have no documentary evidence, it certainly cannot be denied that one who had travelled as much as Justin would have heard in many of the churches, particularly in Asia Minor, many of these Epistles read in the public worship of the congregations. That Justin occupied in any way a distinctly anti-Pauline position, or wished to disparage him, not only by the exclusion of his name from his writings or by such passages as where he speaks of the Twelve,[2] is highly improbable. The most reasonable explanation of the entire situation seems to be that offered above, and which is corroborated by such writings, for instance, as the Epistle to Diognetus (c. v. and ix.)—that is, that although the writings of St. Paul were known and used probably to a greater degree than can ever be proved, yet that the idea of a New Testament Canon, as we now understand it, was still but imperfectly grasped, and consequently its contents are not definitely known or strictly defined. The Old

[1] *Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Theologie*, S. 408, 1875.

[2] 1 Apol. 39, 45.

Testament and the "Memoirs of the Apostles" are the authorities which Justin recognizes and uses exclusively. Yet, as has been already said, the problem of the Pauline Epistles in their relation to not only Justin and his contemporaries, but to every age, includes two questions which must be clearly distinguished and separately determined.

I. As to the authority of St. Paul's writings—that is, the extent to which they were regarded as a source of Christian truth and the authority attributed to them. This first question may be regarded as having been answered already, since we find no classification which places any Christian writings, save the Evangelical narratives, on anything like the same level with the Old Testament.

II. The further question, as to the influence of St. Paul's writings—that is, the extent to which they shaped and moulded the life and thought of the Christian Church of the first half of the second century—is a far more important and also a far more difficult question.

The Gospel was first preached to those who had been prepared by a long history full of vicissitudes and hopes, inspired by most passionate convictions, and exalted by the loftiest prophetic dreams. When it passed outside the land of its birth it came in contact with quite a different order of thought. The world which it then entered was the representative of the most powerful organizing force which history knows, and also the heir of the most splendid literature which any race has ever produced.

It was a world which had its accredited traditions, established beliefs, and long and venerable religious histories. All that art and reverence could do to make religion splendid had been done. Amid all the varieties of heathenism there are some common ideas everywhere present. If heathenism is in any way the reflection or expression of human nature, it must be then that we see in these ideas the natural mode of regarding religion. One of the characteristic features of all ancient religions is, under various forms, that of ordinance or law. In the most degenerate forms we see nothing but a prescribed and often meaningless ritual, but even in the highest forms there is always present the idea that religion consists in the fulfilment of specific commands and the obedience to certain definite requirements—in other words, that religion is a code of law differing in contents but not in kind from other codes. The instinct for so regarding religion is so prevalent that it is for ever reappearing, and the natural affinity which the human mind has for this process of thought always opens the door for its acceptance. The heathen convert could not escape from the subtle influence of the long and venerable civilization of which he was a child, and which pressed upon him with such silent, ceaseless, unnoticed, and yet overwhelming force through every avenue of life. He might escape from or antagonize the life around him, but he could not escape from his inheritance, or enter with ease into a new world of thought and hope, without an effort which few could make, be-

cause only the few would have their self-consciousness roused to this intellectual need of a new conception of the resources and spiritual wealth of the new life in the Gospel.

In the mind of St. Paul it is undoubtedly true that the Gospel is differentiated from all other religions in that it is a life of the spirit—a life of faith, pure and simple. No one would deny that this was the distinguishing feature in the Gospel as contrasted with all other religions in his mind. Not the only feature, indeed, but as the mode of appropriation and the source and organ of man's spiritual elevation, certainly the key to St. Paul's conception of the Gospel. Perhaps no better illustration, and certainly no more decisive one, of the influence of the Pauline Epistles on the Gentile Church could be found than that offered by the use of this word 'Πίστις' in the writings which have come down to us. Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Polycarp, all use the word again and again, but they do not mean the same thing as St. Paul, nor does it occupy in their minds anything like the same place which it had in the Apostle's. Of the first, it has been said by his learned editor that, "Though he emphasizes faith with fond reiteration, he does not realize its doctrinal significance according to the teaching of St. Paul as the primary condition of acceptance with God, the mainspring of the Christian life."[1] He speaks of 'faith and hospitality' in the same category, and clearly does not intend that there

[1] Lightfoot, *Clement of Rome*, vol. i. p. 397.

shall be inferred any such distinction for the former as all students of St. Paul must inevitably assign to it.[1] In Ignatius and Polycarp the same use of the word is made which later we find in the Epistle of Barnabas and the 2 Epistle of Clement, and which continues to be the customary meaning until the theological or dogmatic definition of it as an objective body of doctrine supersedes the earlier and more indefinite, or at least more subjective, conception. Only among the Gnostics do we find any variation from this common mode of conceiving this word. Basilides, in his views of faith, seems more nearly to approach St. Paul than the church writers of his age, but his language is rather that of a mediæval mystic, and means something else than the spiritual union which St. Paul had in mind. It is an intellectual intuition which is along the line of, and in harmony with, the Greek thought of his own age, and did not have its origin in a clear understanding and appreciation of St. Paul.[2] If this testimony should be considered to be of too negative a character and not decisive of the positive convictions of the mass of Christians of this age, we

[1] 1 Clem. 10, 7; 12, 1.

[2] Passages in "Apostolic Fathers" on the use of 'Pistis':— 1 *Clementis Epistula*, 1, 2; 3, 4; 5, 6; 6, 2; 10, 7; 12, 1; 12, 8; 31, 2; 58, 2; 60, 4; 62, 2; 64. *S. Ignatii Epistulæ et Martyrium*, Ad Ephe. 3, 1; 7, 2; 9, 1; 13, 1; 14, 1, 2: Ad Mag. 6, 1; 1, 1; 13, 1: Ad Phil. 8, 2; 11, 2: Ad Smyr. 10, 2; 6, 1; 13, 2: Ad Trall. 8, 1. *Epistula Polyc.*, 1, 2; 3, 2; 4, 2, 3; 13, 2. *Barnabæ Epistula*, 1, 5, 6; 2, 2; 4, 8, 9; 6, 17; 16, 18; 16, 9. *Opera Patrum Apostolicorum*, vol. ii., Tübingen, 1881 (Funk).

have positive statements which go to show that the minds of men were running in a line directly opposed to one of the fundamental convictions of the great Apostle. The legal conception which regards the Gospel as the 'New Law,' the 'Nova Lex,' was not a later idea which was introduced under the stress of certain problems, but the natural outcome of previous modes of thought and established and firmly rooted convictions. Both in the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas we see very clearly that this seemed to be to them the natural way of looking at the subject of religion.[1] Later, when the Christian writers were compelled to defend the Gospel against heathen charges of novelty, they resorted to the argument that the contents of the Gospel were old and not new, that in substance it was already included in the religion of the Old Testament; but this was an afterthought, and not the expression of an inherited instinct or tendency.

When we examine the writings of Justin with reference to his relation to the fundamental ideas of St. Paul, we find that in this respect he has not varied in any noticeable degree from the mode of thought which prevailed in the preceding writers, and does not attain to any closer understanding of the Apostle than they did. In this examination the two main and undisputed sources of our knowledge of Justin will be used—that is, the two Apologies and the Dialogue with Trypho—but the two will not be

[1] Barnabas, c. 4, 8; 10, 2; 14, 7: Hermas, Sim. viii. 3, 2; v.

separated. The main ideas of both, as they are related to the leading thoughts of St. Paul's conception of the Christian life, will be examined somewhat in detail.

When we compare the most important ideas in the mind of St. Paul with those which seem to rule the mind of Justin, we are struck with the wide divergence between them on some most vital points; and not only that, but the grouping and arrangement is entirely different, and the emphasis has been so shifted that it is hard to detect any resemblance at many points, even with the best intention. The difference is so great that critics have been divided, and those who assert, and those who deny, any relation between Justin and St. Paul are about equal in number and importance.[1]

The contrast is very striking in the sense and feeling which each has for the consciousness which we call the sense of sin. That deep moral consciousness of St. Paul, which writhed in burning shame before the purity of God, and which made his own sinfulness one of the most passionate and overwhelming convictions of his soul, does not seem to have reappeared with any great intensity in any Greek mind which came under the influence of the

[1] "Credner, Volkmar, Zeller, Schwegler, Hilgenfeld, Overbeck, and Thoma deny any traces of Pauline ideas, and assert a hostile attitude on the part of Justin towards the Apostle. On the other hand, Semisch, Otto, Ritschl, Weizsäcker, and others, assert that he was influenced by the Apostle, but without any clear understanding of his ideas."—Engelhardt, *Das Christenthum Justins des Martyrers*, S. 352.

Gospel. There was something which looked like it in the rigid scrupulosity, in the growing asceticism, and in the multiplied prohibitions. But this self-loathing was associated mainly with the material influences and environment, not with the spiritual nature of man. All these various expressions and condemnations sprang from another root than that from which the language of St. Paul issued. The sentiment in the soul of St. Paul was religious; it was the sense of God in His nearness to his soul which withered up all his self-affirmations. In Justin and the heathen Christians the sentiment is ethical; it is the sense of personal disqualification which demands a new discipline and obedience. The ultimate ground of the life of man as set forth in the Gospel, as it presented itself to the heathen Christian, was not the new divine consciousness which Christ revealed as a possible thing for every man, but a purely moral basis, a new law, no less original but more fundamental and comprehensive than any previously revealed law. How this mode of thought was influenced by the Gnostic speculations it would not be easy to say. They felt that the problem of Evil was 'The Problem,' and they grasped it with such intensity that it may have had a reactionary effect upon the vast majority of plain Christians, and caused them to take a less stringent view of it. This, of course, would be a natural tendency, and, moreover, would fall in with the prevailing habits of the Greek mind, which seems to have had a horror of those dark and mysterious enigmas that fasci-

nated the more sombre and passionate mind of the East.

However this may be, the language which Justin uses on this subject is of the vaguest and most indefinite character; yet Justin may fairly be called a representative of the Christianity of his age—that is, the Christianity which was to succeed, and did succeed, in giving the direction for the future. He assumes, it is true, the universal rule of sin brought about by the falling away of man from God and the influence of evil impulses and the power of the Demons, but this sin does not present itself to him as the catastrophe in the spiritual life of man which it does to St. Paul. Of Adamic sin, or original sin in any sense of the word, he says nothing. The whole human race is under a curse,[1] but not only is the term not defined, which possibly we have no reason to expect, but it is evidently not a very definite thought in his mind, and the relations of sin to man are conceived in a way external rather than internal and spiritual. For although death was introduced by Adam, yet each man sins for himself and is punished for his sins, and his sinfulness in no way affects his power of choice. The moral constitution of man now is the same that it always has been, and the necessity which Justin speaks of is not the necessity of a nature which has been perverted beyond the power of self-restoration, but only that which arises from the presence of evil impulses in it. In this conception it is evident that the

[1] *Dial. Try.*, c. 95.

influence of Plato has been greater than that of St. Paul. Looking closer, we see that error and sin have not destroyed the fundamental relations which exist between man and God in this world, and in the profoundest view of man's life this is true. If we mean that the attitude of God in his Fatherly love for man remains unchanged in spite of man's transgression, the revelation of Jesus Christ is the completest confirmation of this assertion which can be given.

But if, on the other hand, it is meant by this assertion that the fact of man's sin has in no way raised spiritual barriers and darkness around him, and limited and abridged his own higher spiritual activity, then it is not true that the relations have remained unchanged. It is this latter view which seems to represent most correctly the thought which lies behind the language of Justin. The term 'Debt,' which in the mind of St. Paul stood for the spiritual orphanage and self-alienation of man and his antagonism to the will and character of God, and is thus a synonym, if not for sin, at least for its results, is quite differently conceived in the mind of Justin. A far more superficial conception is associated with it, and one which has of necessity no spiritual roots. It is the mere accumulation, addition, and multiplication of specific moral acts which constitutes the debt or sin of man, and the measure of it is to be found, not in spiritual dynamics, but in mathematics. It has been said, "Of hereditary guilt, the Greek Fathers of the Ante-Nicene Age

know nothing."[1] Whether this statement is accepted in all its breadth, at least it can be affirmed of Justin Martyr that his conception of sin, whether hereditary or as the expression of the individual soul and an element in human consciousness, had only the most external resemblance to that of St. Paul. Lest we should be disposed to think that this difference is after all only a matter of words, we need but to trace back to the original consciousness, out of which all thought emerges, these special forms of expression, and see in what relation these various elements stand to the spiritual ideal which lies behind them all, to discover how entirely different are the demands upon life of the logical dogmas of the intellect or the intuitions of the moral nature from those of the religious consciousness. We see in the heathen Christian world, almost from the very beginning, the fact set forth that the Gospel had entered into a new stadium of its history. We can recognize this from the illustration afforded to us in the conception of this one element of man's spiritual history. Justin's conception of sin is neither that of the contemporaneous Judaism nor the Pauline Christian; it is Greek and Pagan, sharpened, however, and deepened as a result of his Christian feeling.

More sharply and clearly defined in his divergence from St. Paul is Justin in his conception of the law and its relation to the redeemed soul. In considering a subject like this, it is always necessary to

[1] Baur, *Vorlesungen über Dogmengeschichte*, B. i. S. 585.

bear in mind that the writers of this age were so steeped in the language of the Old Testament that their phraseology oftentimes has a legal cast which was inevitable, but which did not by any means always belong to the ideas which they sought to express. Oftentimes they used "Old Testament expressions for New Testament thoughts," but, as a general rule, it may be said that if they did not mean the strictly Jewish and legal thought which was associated with the language, they were almost equally removed from the circle of ideas which appear in the Pauline Epistles. The term 'New Law' as applied to the Gospel, in opposition to the Old Testament or Jewish law, appears very early in the Christian literature of the second century. As has been already said, Barnabas uses it, and also the Shepherd of Hermas, but the legal conception in these writers is by no means fully or completely developed, or at least not emphasized with the same accuracy and sharpness which characterizes later writers. Yet the language points in the direction the minds of Christians were moving, and gives reliable, though slight, indications of what was coming. With Justin the uncertain and wavering thought becomes more fixed and definite. The law appears as the natural form under which truth should be revealed, and the Gospel is the 'New Law' as marking a further advance in revelation. Yet the distinction between the old and the new is one purely of time. The differences are relatively unimportant, or at least not affecting this, its primary

character. The old law was intended for the Jews, and had no further application ; but the new was an universal law intended for all mankind, and opposed to the Jewish law. The opposition, however, was only in contents. The new revelation fell into the same category, and had the same essential form and legal conception behind it.[1] That Justin failed to recognize the connection as well as the distinction between the old and the new economy, and to comprehend the difference between the Law and the Gospel, does not bear hard upon him, for it was the universal and, we may say, inevitable attitude of heathen Christianity. Under the circumstances, the state of culture and the slow progress of the highest and most powerful ideas involved in the revelation of Jesus Christ, nothing different can be demanded of an age so unlearned in the vast significance of a revelation which filled men with the overpowering splendour and beauty of its perfection. The historical significance of the election of Israel was entirely without meaning to them, and while they converted the Old Testament into a Christian book, at the same time they interpreted the Gospel in terms of law.

That Justin understood the distinction in the conception of religion which was introduced by the presence of the person of Jesus Christ among men, we have no reason to think. He felt the influence of it as all men feel it, but his mind still ran in the old grooves through which untold generations had

[1] *Dial. Try.*, c. 11.

been accustomed to pour their thoughts. All the evidence goes to sustain this view, and even about the old law he seems to have had ideas which are singularly at variance with those of St. Paul. Christians could and would observe the law, did they not know that it had been inflicted upon the Jews as a punishment for their transgressions.[1] There was no inherent difficulty, or at least no insuperable obstacle, to so doing. As contrasted with the old law, however, Christianity is superior in this respect chiefly—that is, that it is much simpler than the old, and limits itself to such essentials as render it possible for every man to keep it.[2] This conception of the Gospel was undoubtedly strengthened by the polemical intention already referred to—that is, the motive which influenced most Christian writers in their replies to heathen attacks. The criticism which Celsus makes, that Christianity was a novelty, was doubtless not of his own creation, but part of the general attack of the dominant heathenism. The Christian defenders, in order to justify their faith, often took positions which in the light of the present are seen to be entirely untenable, and imply misconceptions whose effect could not but be injurious to the true development of Christian thought and life. The endeavour to find in the Gospel only that which was believed by all good men always, and which was believed to be the essence of the Old Testament revelation, may have been in part directed against Marcion and those who held like

[1] *Dial. Try.*, c. 18. [2] *Ibid.*, c. 95, 105.

views with him in regard to the Old Testament; but undoubtedly there was another element, and that was the side which this truth presented to the attacks upon the Gospel by the heathen. When Justin asserts that Plato borrowed from Moses, he does not intend by this to pave the way for a reconciliation between Christianity and Heathenism, but only as a proof that the sum of necessary truths which all men believe was in existence long before Plato, and that Christianity is but an extension and expansion of the revelation of the Old Testament, and differs from it in no radical respect. It is the assertion also that the Gospel does not stand on the basis of any novel or original truths. This can be confirmed by a further examination of what constituted the essence of the new law. To Justin's mind, the thought seems constantly present that the divine revelation contained in the Gospel only increases and completes the moral and religious knowledge which man had from creation. He regards the revelation as consisting chiefly in the promulgation of new doctrines and new moral obligations, not as the manifestation of a divine life. This revelation or law, as he conceived it, opened no new way for the spiritual life of man, nor did it create or reveal difference or distinction between the past or the present, or set forth the possibility of a new religious consciousness as of the very heart of it.[1] The contents of the new law are repentance, change of mind, faith in the blood and death of

[1] *Dial. Try.*, c. 105.

Jesus, purification of the heart, and a walk in good works. These phrases do not vary from the language which has been familiar to men from the beginning, but it is the relation of these phrases to the life of man, and the previous interpretation which always lies back of them, which gives them their real significance.

There is one phrase which Justin uses whose meaning is by no means uncertain, and which sweeps away all ambiguity which hangs over his language, and fixes clearly the cardinal conception which lies behind and rules all his Christian terminology. In more than one place he speaks with clearness and emphasis of Jesus Christ as the 'New Lawgiver.'[1] As the 'New Lawgiver' Jesus teaches the essential elements of the Christian life. Yet this is not to be understood as if He was the revelation of the laws of man's spiritual life in sonship to God, but a far different thing, which is altogether legal in its form and ethical in its content and purpose. The doing away of the old law, which is a fundamental idea of both St. Paul and Justin, means in each case almost exactly the opposite thing from what it does in the other.

St. Paul's conception would leave room for the retention of some legal requirements or customs, while abolishing the idea of legality entirely from the domain of the Gospel. Justin, on the other hand, regarded the doing away of the law as the rejection of all that was typically Jewish in the ritual or

[1] *Dial. Try.*, c. 11, 12, 14, 18.

worship of the Gospel, while retaining the idea of the external demands of religion and the primary conception of it as a law guiding from without, rather than as a spirit moving from within.[1] The apparent opposition of the old and the new is only apparent and superficial. All that the law of Christ demands is, according to its nature, the same which God at all times demanded from all men, especially from all sinners, and which they were always in a position to fulfil.[2]

This conception of the new law, which has been attributed to Justin, can readily be proved by noting the value and significance which he assigns to faith, which by St. Paul is placed in direct opposition and contrast to the law and all legal conceptions. A word which enters so largely into the literature of Christianity could not well be, and is not, absent from the writings of Justin. Yet, if resemblance of thought, and not the mere form and framework of thinking, is the true evidence of spiritual relationship, it must be confessed that whatever doubts may intrude themselves on other points, there can be none on this.

[1] "In J. Augen ist das Christenthum das neue Gesetz: die Abschaffung des alten Gesetzes hat eine ganz andere Bedeutung als bei Paulus, und wird auch anders begrundet. J. verwirft das Essen des Gotzenopferfleisches; Paulus thut das Gegentheil. J. gestattet die Gesetzbeobachtung auch im Christenthum; Paulus verwirft sie. J. kennt eine Gerechtigkeit im Gesetz; der Apostel weist nichts davon. J. hat von der Glaubensgerechtigkeit im Gegensatz zur Gesetzgerechtigkeit keine Ahnung. Überhaupt richtet sich J., Kritik nie gegen den Begriff, sondern immer nur gegen den Inhalt des Gesetzes."—Engelhardt, S. 61.

[2] *Dial. Try.*, c. 44; Engelhardt, S. 254.

St. Paul's use of the word Faith, and the meaning he attaches to it, are by no means the same as those of Justin. And it will be readily admitted by all who have given any study whatever to the Pauline theology, that this word represents a cardinal idea, a fundamental conception in his mind which dominates and pervades not only all his thinking, but is the highest expression of his religious experience. In Justin Martyr, on the other hand, although it is constantly in use, its place in his thought is relatively different, and his conception of it quite foreign to that of St. Paul. The frequency with which the word occurs, and the various ways it enters into his writings, might lead one to think there was considerable variety of meaning, or that, in a general way, it had a vague resemblance to the thought of St. Paul on the same subject. But, generally speaking, its fundamental significance is always the same. Resting, as Justin does, so exclusively on the prophecies of the Old Testament, the most original meaning of the word Faith to him was simply a belief in prophecy.[1] As prophecy was the authentication and verification of the new Lawgiver and the new law, the faith in prophecy naturally involved an acceptance of this new Lawgiver and the new law, whose contents were the sum of all true knowledge. This 'Holding as true' was the essential character of faith, and even in the great historical facts of the Gospel history nothing more was meant, and nothing more seemed involved, than the recognition that Jesus Christ is the

[1] 1 Apol. 3, 30, 33, 36, 40.

Son of God, and that His doctrine is true. It is apparently an intellectual matter throughout, at least in its origin, although a life of righteousness and good works is supposed to issue from this original conviction, and may in the mind of Justin have been involved in it. Nevertheless, faith never seems to mean that complete self-surrender to God, and that personal trust and union with Christ, which is the very heart of the Apostle's Christian life and thought. The vivid personality of Jesus Christ which glowed before the yearning eyes of the Apostle, and was the very passion of his soul, has given place to a cold philosophical abstraction borrowed from the Greek schools. It is but justice, however, to recognize the fact that in that age in which abstract conceptions and metaphysical ideas were clothed with a reality and distinctness we are unable to grasp with our less philosophical imaginations, such language may have been more satisfying, and entered more deeply into the souls of men than we are able to realize. But after all allowances are made for the different modes of thought, it must be confessed that while the language and teaching of Justin might lead men to an acceptance of the formal truths which were associated with the Gospel, it is difficult to see how they could be the means of bringing men into that spiritual condition in which Christ becomes to them the spiritual atmosphere of their life, and their religious natures find their highest expression in union with God. There is no suggestion in his writings that would lead one to think that he had

seen anything beyond this formal and conventional interpretation which rose out of his dependence upon established modes of thought and reliance upon Old Testament authority. That he never seems to have entered into the higher meaning of faith which belongs to its most complete development in St. Paul, or have had any anticipations of it, is clear from the different point of view in which he regards it as related to the Christian life. With the Apostle it stands alone as the final expression of the spiritual union of the soul with Christ. With Justin it is classed as a virtue with other virtues. Since virtues are not the essence and heart of the life, but only the expression or revelation of it, the absence or presence of one cannot be vital or regarded as an infallible index of the spiritual relations of the soul. The radical opposition of faith and works in St. Paul, which was at its root the effort to restore religion to its true place, or, rather, begin with the beginning, the true beginning, the internal state, has no place in the mind of Justin. It is a far thinner and more superficial idea which is present in his mind. Ultimately it is a confusing and injurious conception which he appears to hold.

Faith in itself is an '*ἔργον*.'[1] It is true St. Paul might have used the word in this way, but he would not have meant the same thing. If the conception of faith and its relations is so different in Justin from that which possesses the mind of the Apostle, so also are the results which issue from it, or are

[1] Engelhardt, S. 249.

dependent upon it, quite different. With St. Paul faith is practically the process or condition by and in which all the highest results of the Gospel are realized. Or, to use his own language, by faith we live in Christ, and in this life in the Son of God realize our own sonship to God. The fulness of our sonship is the perfection of our spiritual natures and perpetual communion with God in the boundlessness and freedom of our divine life. When St. Paul speaks of being 'saved by faith,' he means something quite different from what Justin does when he says, "We are saved by repentance."[1] The spiritual processes and the religious facts which are correlated by these phrases are quite different. With Justin, faith, instead of being that state which is inclusive of all the higher spiritual life, is but an antecedent to piety, and not its root. This piety also is attained or realized by other means and in a different spiritual order of development than that indicated by St. Paul.[2] The thought of that perfect communion with God and fellowship with Christ, which is the very heart of St. Paul's conception of man's sonship to God, does not appear to have been understood by Justin, or, if recognized as a fact, does not seem to have been seen in its proper spiritual order as essential to the full realization of Christ's salvation. Fellowship with God seems to be always present as a principle of thought, but, as a matter of fact, it is always reserved for a later period of man's history before it can be realized—that is, it is not attained until after death.

[1] 1 Apol. 28.

[2] Engelhardt, S. 191.

This mode of conceiving the full realization of Christ's salvation strikes no one to-day with any sense of novelty or repugnance, for it has been the conventional and customary point of view ever since the age of Justin, and, we may say, is a characteristic inclination of human nature. In Justin's day the philosophical tendencies were all deepening the chasm which men believed lay between man and God, and the sense of this aloofness was the underlying presupposition of all man's convictions as well as speculations. To bridge this abyss was the effort of both religion and philosophy, and while as a theoretical proposition it was one of the truths of the Christian revelation that God had made known His life to man, yet, as something deeper than a proposition—that is, the practical union of the soul of man and God in no pantheistic absorption, but in a close filial relation of will and feeling—the fellowship of man with God was referred to the future. The relationship which was actually supposed to exist, and which was that set forth by Justin, was almost purely external and objective. God was the Creator and Governor of the world. From Him proceeded rule, authority, judgment, and the administration of justice. On the other side stood man far off and separated from God, and from him was expected or demanded obedience, repentance, and, as a result of these, he might have hope for the future. The sonship, which was the faith of the Apostle, was not in a future state where it should be bestowed as a reward or realized as a fulfilment, but in an actual relation

here and now between the human soul and the Father who had redeemed it in Christ. With Justin, death, and not Christ, was the means by which that sonship was to be realized, and the condition of its attainment was the immortality which was given as a reward to those who obeyed and believed God.[1] This is a mode of conceiving the religious relations of the soul which, starting with Christ, can claim for itself the name of Christian. But it unfolds no lofty ideal, it furnishes no ground in the present for that living inspiration which is the very heart of the highest living. There is no stamp upon it of that divine supremacy over life which is, in its wide outlook and freedom, the lofty distinction of the sons of God. A recent critic has defined the intellectual position of Justin in language which to some may seem severe and harsh. But to deal justly with a man and rightly understand him, it is necessary to bear in mind the broad distinction which exists between a man's theology and his religion, the intellectual forms of his thinking and the living stream of piety which issues from his life in God. With this distinction in mind, the language of the German critic does not seem unfair : " Justin was a Christian, but he was a Christian in this sense that he believed in God and Christ. But in all he says about God and the world, about man and his destiny, about sin and guilt, redemption and forgiveness, righteousness and blessedness, death and life, he reveals his dependence upon modes of thought

[1] Engelhardt, S. 92.

which were established in heathenism as soon as it rose above coarse idolatry to a reasonable moral faith in God."[1]

The confusion which seems always to exist in the minds of men between religion and morality, the inspirations of the spiritual life and expression of the moral will, was helped in this age by the great wave of asceticism which swept over the Empire in the second century along with the great religious awakening which marks this same century. This yearning for a higher life could not utterly separate itself from the conditions which surround it, and leap to a clear knowledge of what the Gospel meant, or a full realization of its blessing. Had it done so, the spiritual history of man would have been complete. The realization of any ideal means centuries of history. The asceticism, which is such a conspicuous feature of this period, did not spring from Christian seed. It has been the boast of the Saints, but it was also a characteristic of Neoplatonism and Stoicism. It was foreign to the Gospel, and forced itself upon the Church with the passion of a great world movement. It brought fame and lustre to many a Christian hero, but it both hardened and lowered the ideal of life and the conception of religion. It identified it with a harsh and stern morality and an external piety. Morality is better than sin, and its laws are the foundation of human society; but obedience to the moral law is not religion, and the recognition of its divine authority not faith. The

[1] Engelhardt, S. 210.

secret springs of life, the finer capacities of the soul, are not touched by such demands. The ideal of the Apostle and the Lord he worshipped was of all men living in loving brotherhood with each other and in living communion with God in Christ. This ideal cannot be reached by the mere acceptance of some historical or theological proposition on the one hand, or by the adoption of a stern asceticism on the other. This incapacity to distinguish between morality and religion—an incapacity which still remains largely strengthened by ecclesiastical traditions and customs —weakened the power of the Gospel as the appeal of the life of God to the heart of man. The Apostolic Christianity, and above all others that of St. Paul, laid the emphasis upon the religious relations or the spiritual side of life. Justin Martyr, and with him his contemporaries and the succeeding Catholic Christianity, placed the emphasis upon the moral side of life and developed it in their ethical and legal ideal, which is the ideal of all legal religion.[1] It is often said that men's lives, rather than their words, are to be taken as a real ground of estimate of their characters. It is perfectly true that oftentimes the motives and influences which are working on their spiritual natures do not find a full and adequate expression in their speech. More frequently, on the other hand, do the logical systems and the intellectual traditions which they have inherited work outward in the theories which they promulgate and the arguments which they advance. Yet, however

[1] Ritschl, *Entstehung des Altkatolische Kirche*, S. 331.

possible it may be for such differences to exist in any given case, an age which cannot think its life into full and clear expression, and note and distinguish the forces at work upon it in their real character, will tend to lose sight of the primary inspirations which have guided it, and the paths into which it has been directed. It was so with this past with which we are dealing.

Justin died a martyr to his faith in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the wisest, tenderest, and purest man that ever sat upon the Imperial throne. If the words which have been reported were really those of Justin, we know that in this supreme hour of trial he was raised above the limitations of his age, above the traditions of his generation, the confusions and folly of controversies, the dim atmosphere of conjecture and speculation, the weaknesses of his own mortal nature, into the very presence of that Eternal Love whose fellowship and strength are the life of the sons of God.

CHAPTER III

IRENÆUS AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

"THE form of Christianity which the great Catholic teachers, Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement, and Origen, reveal, is an essentially different one from that of the New Testament. The Catholic Church, as it issued from the mighty spiritual movement of the second century, bears, in organization, doctrine, and moral ideal, a characteristically different stamp from that of the Messianic community of the Apostolic Age."[1] These words of the distinguished German scholar bring before us the great change which was taking place in the history of the Church, and also the important part which it was beginning to play in the life of the world. Perhaps there has been no one period or stage in the history of the Church which has been so differently regarded as that which comes before us in the latter half of the second century. In the literature which has survived to

[1] R. A. Lipsius, *Die Zeit des Ireænus von Lyon u. d. Entstehung d. Altkatolische Kirche*; Von Sybel, *Hist. Zeitschrift*, B. xxviii. S. 244, 1872.

us from this period we see new ideas and new institutions, new motives and forces, coming into view, and in the current and movement which they create, changing the tone and character of Christian thought and motive most significantly. At first glance one sees that Irenæus occupies a different point of view from Justin Martyr. If this statement appears too emphatic or exaggerated, it will, at least, be admitted that an immense change has taken place —a change which cannot easily be overestimated. The period bears upon it the stamp of an age of transition — that is, new forces are developing beside the old ones, and different outlooks and modes of regarding the life of the Church, together with new paths for energy and enterprise, are opening up. During the first half of the second century the Church had spread slowly and steadily, but towards the end of that period the rate of increase had been accelerated and the growth had been relatively enormous. Long before the close of the century it was recognized as one of the most powerful factors in the shaping of the destiny of the Empire.[1] The Church had now passed out of the seclusion and obscurity of its beginning, and was, with its larger growth, drawn into the general life of the Empire and the wide stream of universal history which it was to influence so deeply, and by which, in turn, it was to be so profoundly affected. This more

[1] "By the middle of the third century Rome is supposed to have had as many as 50,000 Christians."—Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. i. p. 379.

prominent position and closer contact with the world involved a reflex action of that world upon its history, by touching it at every point, and pouring the great stream of its life around the vigorous roots of the young Church.[1]

To see what influences were at work in society, and thus to be in a position to recognize the presence of these forces as they affect the life of the Church, it is advisable to take a brief survey of the life of the Empire in the second century, the ideas and habits of thought, the prevailing sentiments and spiritual forces, and the common mood. The material is so vast, and the evidence often so conflicting, because coming from such various sources, that one leaves the study of this period with a partial sense of confusion, and a very large one of uncertainty, about many important details. Yet the impression, though lacking oftentimes sharpness of definition, is still clear in outline. The immense variety and richness of life, the endless change, the ceaseless ebb and flow of feelings whose depth and tenacity we are unable to measure, the subtle reserve, the passionate endeavour, all call forth a large restraint of judgment and the profoundest charity. The farther we go, the more certain are we to modify

[1] "From its first appearance in the world, the Christian Church could not escape the influence of ruling ideas begotten in the great cycles of human thought. Beneath every age there flows a stream of tendency modifying the currents of human existence, creating also counter currents, so that opposite and contrasted movements may have a common source."—A. V. G. Allen, *Christian Institutions*, p. 442.

our criticism and change our estimate of the various kinds of evidence. Standing at such a remote distance from the scenes we are studying, we do not realize the immense importance of time, or understand to its full extent how far removed one generation or age may be from another which seems to us very close to it. We do not at first glance appreciate the subtle change in temper, in moral purpose or spiritual aspiration and endeavour, which often takes place while the political conditions and the external life remain apparently unchanged. We think too often of the Empire and its moral atmosphere as we see it reflected in the pages of the historians of the early Cæsars. The frightful condition of things under the rule of these Emperors seems too often to represent to people the state of society permanently under the influence of Paganism. But the wild extravagance, the hideous debauchery, the coarse and brutal excesses, brought a reaction, and the second century saw a great change in the world. It is the testimony of the highest living authority, the historian Mommsen, that "The Imperial Age of Rome has been more abused than we know." It was bad enough undoubtedly, but it is very doubtful whether we gain a more correct view of the society of the Imperial Age from the satirists and the Christian Fathers, than we do of the present age from the critics of modern society. The silent life of the world cannot be measured, and attracts but little the censors and critics of society. It should always be borne in mind that the Court was

not Rome, and Rome was not the Empire, and the first century was not the second. It is from the side of the common life that we learn what the true meaning of an age is, and what spiritual forces are at work in it. Looking at the second century in this manner, the thing which is the most impressive feature in the large life of the Empire is the rise and spread of a great religious revival, which left its stamp upon all classes and gave a different tone to the whole life of society. The leading philosophical systems were in entire harmony with this movement, and became a great force in the development and extension of it. The aim of ancient philosophy, so far, at least, as it was the expression of the Greek mind, was to achieve redemption for man through investigation and knowledge. The faith in this means of salvation never quite disappeared from it, and the failure to realize it only led to a different method, from the objective to the subjective; but the end was, in fact, reached by the same means—the intellectual. At the time in which the revival in religion was the most widespread, there was also apparently of necessity a most significant growth of interest in philosophy as a means of social culture in the highest sense, and spiritual elevation and redemption. All men were impressed by the decay in energy and social virtue, and the more serious made an effort to restore the nobleness of the past by means of the religious inheritance which they possessed, and which had never been entirely discredited. It was an age of the fusion of many races

and ideas, and also of many religions. The grosser forms of Polytheism did not represent either the intellectual elevation or the moral tone of the higher and more serious convictions of Pagans in the second century. These strove to readjust the old religion to the new conditions by reinterpreting and re-enforcing it with different forms of worship and new ideas drawn from the religious life of the different nations within the limits of the Empire. Polytheism, in its endless manifestations, belonged to the universal life of the age. The art, literature, poetry, the customs, the schools, the very life itself—in fact, the entire culture of the period—was saturated with it, and its roots lay back in the primitive consciousness of mankind. The tendency of the Paganism of this age, so characteristic especially of that of Greece and Rome, to see under the guise and names of the foreign gods those belonging to their own religion, made the spread of foreign worships throughout the Empire extraordinarily easy. So in all parts of it—in Britain, Spain, Gaul, Africa, and the farthest East—were worshippers of Isis and Osiris, of Baal and Astarte, of Mithras, as well as of the chief deities of Greece and Rome ; and the worship of the Emperor was the common bond for this huge mass of dissimilar and conflicting ideas and religions, so complete was the diffusion of ideas and worships through the vast limits of the Empire.[1]

[1] Friedlander, *Sittengeschichte*, iii. S. 446. "The soldiers carried the strange religions to all parts of the Empire."—Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, p. 575.

The higher and more cultivated classes encouraged this popular religious revival, because they felt that it was the only force which could permanently or deeply influence the mass of ignorant and vicious, which seemed to be sinking into the dullest and grossest barbarism. Another reason was that they were able to see, under the forms of the popular religions, truths which, as religious men as well as philosophers, they regarded as of the supremest importance. In their compromising efforts they went to the extreme limits of the grossest superstition, and the vulgarest forms of the popular worship were accepted and justified, as they had been by Plutarch, by men whose theoretical postulates demanded the most rigid scepticism. But the profound instincts upon which religion rested, and to which it appealed, swept away all merely theoretical considerations, and in the final manifestations of Neoplatonism we see the last tragic effort of the Greek mind to find a solution of the great problems of life through philosophy. But this pathetic struggle had not yet reached its climax in the second century. On the contrary, the seriousness and earnestness which are manifest, show clearly that a hope still lay down behind this new development of the religious interests of men. As has been already noted, the characteristic feature of ancient philosophy was that it conceived redemption as a matter of the *human* will primarily and alone, and the way to it was through intellectual enlightenment. The forms of

the popular religion were tolerated, but the real achievement of salvation was through philosophical culture, which was represented by so many schools, and which had gained for itself in the past such unenviable distinction among the common people. For philosophy in its essence, and especially ancient philosophy, was primarily aristocratic. Like the gods on Olympus, these speculators and dreamers looked down upon the hopeless crowd which struggled along amid the trials, temptations, ignorance, and weakness of common mortality. It was reminiscent too, and this, at one period at least, was a cause of its great unpopularity at Rome. In the early days of the Empire it still dreamed of the Republic, and scorned the men who accepted the new situation. So great was the political disfavour which it excited, that in the year 93 A.D. Domitian expelled the philosophers from Rome. As a rule, the old Cæsarism, like the modern Cæsarism, recognized in philosophy an 'Ideology' which was dangerous to the State. It seemed also to draw men away from the daily duties of citizenship, and was for this reason disliked by the practical Roman. The condemnation of the coarse life of the masses aroused a natural antagonism probably, but, in reality, was less likely to create hostility than the pride and contempt with which the philosophers were accustomed to present their higher morality in contrast with the customs of society. In the second century, however, the philosophers were much less repugnant to the

government, and gradually rose in Imperial favour. But this patronage hurt philosophy and the philosophers in popular esteem, as well as lowered their tone and independence, as later the same favour injured the Church and weakened the moral tone and purity of the Christian life. In the period which we are studying, the Ancient World had called all its forces together, and was determined to make one more effort at a higher life, and appealed to all to unite in this one common purpose. It was seriously undertaken, and accomplished much. The slight touch of unreality which belongs to philosophic speculations, and the academic air which repels the ignorant, were banished or concealed by the real sincerity of motive, and the unselfish zeal with which the effort was made. The movement began on the basis of the established Polytheism, and the acceptance of the gods as real beings intermediate between the Ultimate Being and man, which seems to us like a weak compromise. To the philosopher, however, the gods were no more than the angels and saints are to the Christian theologian, and to the people in many Christian countries to-day the saints and angels are no less than the gods were to the popular mind of Paganism. In this regard Celsus could see no difference between the common Christian and the ignorant Pagan of his day.

This new movement neither contemplated nor accomplished any break with the ancient culture or the established philosophical traditions. It was simply a reanimation of the older thought of the

past, with such modifications as were inevitable in all such cases where a new path in intellectual progress is not discovered, and the originality and energy of life and thought have no creative principle to inspire them. The three great schools which controlled the forms in which this new awakening was to express itself were the Stoic, Epicurean, and Cynic.

Rome, the 'Holy City' of Paganism, was the centre of the largest philosophical activity at this period, and decidedly the most conspicuous one. The Roman, by instinct and disposition, naturally was attracted towards Stoicism, and especially was this the case among the more intelligent and serious-minded. This not only because it appealed to the sober and earnest mind of the Roman, but because it was practical and not speculative, and laid the emphasis on ethics and not metaphysics. This in itself shows that men were unwilling to lose themselves in speculations of what seemed to them a vague and abstract kind, but were thinking of and appreciating the enormous value of life as opposed to what they considered mere abstractions. The open-mindedness of the Roman to all serious thought is witnessed by the fact that when, in the previous century, Plutarch the Platonist lectured in Rome, all the world of serious and intelligent Romans flocked to hear him. The widespread interest in philosophy was further increased by the new tone which Stoicism and Epicureanism alike adopted in opposition to the earlier schools of that

name. There was a new spiritual passion manifest which exerted more influence than the mere teaching itself, and had in it the thrill of life and a subtle persuasiveness which doubled the power of the truth which they set forth. Moreover, they felt they had a mission for all men, and this touch of Universalism marks a distinct break with the spirit which dominated ancient philosophy. The intense seriousness with which the philosophers accepted their vocation is shown in the language of Seneca, who speaks of the study of philosophy much in the way a later Christian would have spoken of entering upon a religious life or joining a religious order. This new spirit affected even their appearance and manner of dress. The Stoics, with their long beards, bare feet, and coarse cloaks, were more like members of a religious order than teachers of philosophy.[1] The more earnest of them looked upon themselves much in the light of 'Spiritual Directors,' and their influence was so wide, and the importance attached to their teaching so great, that we find them in the families of the rich acting in the capacity of private chaplains, consoling the sick, comforting the bereaved, and exhorting and sustaining in the hour of death those who were about to pass away. They dwelt upon the vanity of earthly power and wealth, and bade men turn to the inner life as the only source of peace. There

[1] "It was said of one of these philosophers that his beard was worth to him more than 6000 sesterces."—Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, p. 35.

was a dignity also about the nobler ones which was absent from the earlier teachers of this school, and also from most of the contemporary philosophical teachers. They regarded their calling as a solemn responsibility, and Epictetus bade none join the ranks of philosophy without the sense of a divine call.

Men fled to philosophy for consolation and spiritual strength, as later they retired to the cloister to escape the spiritual dangers of the world about them. The great influence of philosophy, and the high regard in which it was held, is shown from the fact that it spread through all classes and became the common bond of union for those who were socially the most widely separated. It is something of more than passing note that in a world which denied to some not only the rights of freedom, but all other rights which we believe belong to our common humanity, a slave was regarded as one of the most distinguished and honoured members of society simply on the ground of his character and learning, and an Emperor sought his friendship. The relation between Hadrian and Epictetus shows, more distinctly perhaps than anything else, how profoundly this new movement was influencing the lives of men and modifying the older habits and instincts of the Roman World.

But the most popular form of philosophy among the masses was represented by the Cynics. The older Cynicism, which sprang from Antisthenes, a pupil of Socrates, had not retained its influence for any great

length of time, and had fallen into contempt and disfavour ; but in the first century of the Christian era there was a great revival of Cynicism, which accompanied and resulted from the new moral and religious movement which reached its height before the close of the second century. The members of this school were the true mediators between philosophy and the people, and had all the defects of that popular office. They renounced all the ordinary ties and obligations which bound them to society, except the one of guiding and saving it. They gave up their occupations, property, and friends, and lived for the people and by the people. They were missionaries of a true popular kind, with all the mixed results of good and evil. They mingled with the busy life of the town, and delivered their message from the street corners with all the vehemence and power which close contact with, and knowledge of, the life of the world around them would endow them.

These ' Beggar Monks ' of Antiquity, as they have justly been called, added to the general unrest of the age, and fed on the interest and excitement which they produced. Their popularity only increased their numbers, and all the wide margins of the popular life were touched by their active propaganda. It was the old, old story so often repeated. All the idle, lazy, and vicious turned Cynic and crowded the streets like the bands of monks in the later centuries filling the streets of Alexandria, and seeking alms from all in the name

of philosophy.[1] The vulgarity, shamelessness, and insolence of these Capuchins of the Ancient World are a common subject of remark by the writers of this period. Lucian tells us that in Greece the number of Cynics was so great, that they crowded the streets and daily added to their numbers from the cobblers, carpenters, and other craftsmen who deserted their trades to become philosophers. This huge mass of imposition, fraud, and indolence became a perfect plague in all the cities where it was able to establish itself.[2]

When philosophy sat on the throne in the person of the great Emperor Marcus Aurelius, the popularity of the calling was increased tenfold, and a swarm of greedy, scheming sycophants, in the garb of philosophers, crowded round the throne upon which this, the saddest and gentlest of all the philosophers, sat.

Hypocrisy follows reality as a shadow, and the pseudo-philosophers are the best evidence of the extent to which the Empire was under the influence of this new moral purpose. The vast majority of those who professed to teach philosophy were, as would be supposed, Greeks, and often or generally degenerate ones, but the serious temper of the age enabled it to get some inspiration even when the teachers themselves were insincere and mercenary. The mere debaters wrangled over points of doctrine,

[1] "Like the later ecclesiastics they exhorted to almsgiving."—Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, p. 44.

[2] Friedlander, S. 572.

the most minute details of their systems were fought for with the most intense eagerness, and the necessity of a strict orthodoxy was insisted upon by them with as much rigidity as by the most exacting theologian.

Within certain wide limits the forms or types of expression, in which the popular life or deeper social movements express themselves, are repeated with such persistence as to convince one that they represent the permanent and invariable modes in which great movements in human society manifest themselves. In the customs and manners, the methods and organizations, in which the spiritual aspirations and social forces of the Paganism of the second century found expression, we see a prelude or foreshadowing of the Christian centuries which were to follow.

For the most part, the practical aim of philosophy was what commended it to the earnest soul, and by it a man was able to learn something of the meaning of life. It reanimated the popular religion, and gave it a nobler and a purer tone. How much of this general improvement was due to the silent influence of the growing Church is not easy to decide. One of the most influential cults of this period was that of Æsculapius, the god of healing, and dim glimpses of the higher spiritual possibilities of man and of the Divine Nature haunted the minds of men.

This great revival gave Paganism new life and added years to its history. The Polytheism, which in

the days of Cicero and Cæsar was tottering to its ruin, revived and lasted until the fifth century. More than two hundred years of struggle after Constantine were required before the Empire was even nominally Christian. Heathenism was at last subdued, but with what weapons was it too often overcome! Theodosius persecuted it with fire and sword. Finally, in 529 the last of the philosophers were banished by Justinian from Athens, and a mournful little group wandered away into the far East, seeking for that charity and peace which the soldiers of the Prince of Peace refused to give them. As late as the year 538 a Pagan suffered martyrdom for his faith in Constantinople, and the victory seemed complete. This long struggle would seem to indicate a really formidable power in Paganism, but the power was not of an aggressive, or even of a strongly defensive, character. Its strength was simply traditional and conservative, the survival of a habit of mind and an attitude of soul which had existed for centuries. The Pagans had no Church with its strong and vigorous organization. They had no Creed which might be made the centre of unity, nor did they have that profound faith and passionate enthusiasm which were the characteristics of the real fighting Christianity of these centuries. Notwithstanding the influence and prestige of Paganism, resting as it did on immemorial custom and tradition, it lacked the vigour and deep conviction which become the fountain of a new national life and the basis of a new national history, and so was doomed if the

Empire was to live. It was complex, elaborate, philosophic, and subtle—but these elements are not incompatible with real weakness—and it entirely lacked, or seemed to lack, that passion, vehemence, and rich vitality which are characteristic of a large and expanding spiritual life. The consciousness of this is shown in the writings of the Christian teachers of this period, especially of those of Irenæus. The foe he has in mind is not Paganism but Gnosticism, and there is the same feeling on the part of Clement of Alexandria. There is a tone in the attitude of those who deal with Paganism of assurance and victory, which is conspicuously absent from the Pagan writers themselves—like Celsus, for instance.

The height of the great Pagan Revival was reached in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. If the Empire could live on the traditions and inspirations which it had inherited from the past, no fairer opportunity, it would seem, could be offered than that which was set before the world at this time. But the hour of its triumph was touched with the prophecy of defeat. The golden days, not only of Paganism, but of the Empire, closed with the reign of Marcus Aurelius. The atmosphere was filled with the golden haze of Autumn. A rich and melancholy beauty hangs around the memories of the past, and touches the gleaming pillars and lofty temples with a light which was soon to fade away. The sun of the Ancient World blazed forth from the horizon with a radiance which recalled the splendour of its dawn. But the night was at hand.

The early days of Aurelius were the 'Indian summer' of Paganism, but the winter was near. The hand of Death was stretched forth even then, and about the later years of his reign there is something of the melancholy and pathos of approaching age. The mood of the Emperor himself was, as has been said, that of the Neoplatonist rather than that of the Stoic. Sad and resigned, longing for relief from the weary burden of life, he walked already amid the gloom of the future, and over his noble and thoughtful features fell the shadows of a dying religion and a crumbling civilization. The ancient vigour of the race seemed to have passed away. The social unrest, the prevalence of disease, the outbreak of wars, created a panic in the popular mind and filled the world with sad forebodings. More than a century before a voice had been wafted to the sailors on board a ship in the Ægean that "Great Pan was dead," and the echoes of that solemn voice began now to break more clearly upon the ears of men. The dreadful plague of the year 166, the outbreak of wars on the frontier, earthquakes, and strange rumours of impending disasters, filled the minds of men with strange and nameless terrors. It seemed as if the Hand of God was stretched out against the Empire. It smote again and again—plague, famine, and the sword—and the wailing people turned in sudden fury upon the helpless Christians. It is the turning-point in the history of Italy. The villages were deserted or depopulated, the farms abandoned, and everywhere the signs of

approaching collapse. It was at this period that the Campania took upon it that strange tone of melancholy which still impresses the traveller so powerfully. A mental depression, not found in the earlier ages of the Roman race, begins to appear as an almost characteristic mood. There are also many indications pointing to a slow but steady deterioration of the race throughout the whole of the second century. With all its culture and intellectual refinement, there was a dimness of vision and a moral despair, the results of the tension of a life without any clearly recognized ideal—a life which had strained itself in many experiments, and now, with its ancient vigour gone, lay exhausted and hopeless. The race seemed to have reached its limit. The primitive vigour having been expended and the vitality exhausted, there was nothing left but religious bankruptcy and spiritual sterility. This condition had but one hope before it, and that was in the new inspirations and new spiritual ideal of the Gospel. And yet, in watching the spread and development of the Gospel through the Roman World, and noting the profound changes wrought by it, one must not accept these results as the highest attainable ones. For the new life was struggling with a decadent civilization and decadent races, and it is not possible that great ideas and great religious truths or impulses shall find their highest expression or fullest development in a race whose spiritual imagination has been debauched by unspiritual ideals, or its moral energies wasted by

sensual indulgence.[1] A new historic condition must be evolved through the providence of God before the splendid possibilities of the Gospel shall be manifest in the creation of a new and nobler civilization.[2] The resistance which the Empire offered to the Gospel, and the modifications which it demanded, show the weakness and the failure of the old races. This opposition too often took the shape of violent hostility against the growing Church. These persecutions had a thousand sources in men's fears, uneasiness, and despondency, but they reveal only too clearly the despair which lurked behind the ancient and majestic civilization of Rome.

The tremendous spiritual ferment which characterized the second century, while not entirely due to the Gospel, was enormously increased by it. The higher and more imaginative minds, as well as the more ignorant and passionate, which had been

[1] "Seine wirkliche Realisirung konnte das Christenthum nur in einer Menscheit finden, der es bei seinem Eintritt in die Welt unmittelbar nicht tradirt werden konnte. Denn diese konnte es sich nur in einer Menscheit erarbeiten, die bei ihrer ersten Berührung mit ihm noch nicht civilisirt war,—die folglich weder schon ihre natürliche Lebenskraft theilweise verbraucht und erschöpft hatte, noch schon durch ein andres Princip irgend-wie auf eine dem Christenthum fremdartige Weise entwickelt war."—Rothe, *Vorlesungen über Kirchengeschichte*, B. ii. S. 8.

[2] "The old Pagan mind into which history first came could not possibly be the best interpreter of Christianity, and the more the mind is cleansed of the Pagan, the more qualified it becomes to interpret the religion. It is therefore reasonable to expect that the later forms of faith should be the truer and the purer."—Fairbairn, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 187.

touched by the new spiritual life, were thrown into a state which seemed to many to be the harbinger of revolution and anarchy. Old ties were broken; old bonds flung away. To these eyes inflamed with the burning vision, and their imaginations fired with new hopes, the old order seemed about to pass away. Noble traditions and a splendid past were flung aside under the spell of the wonderful future which the Gospel revealed. These violent convulsions of the spiritual life, which were manifest in so many strange forms both within and without the Church, moved with sympathy the restless minds of many who were unable to understand their deeper meaning or see their ultimate issue. The general spiritual uneasiness was thus vastly increased. The situation reacted upon the Church. It stood no longer, as at the beginning, facing only the outcast and the slave, the prodigal and the harlot, the lonely and the broken-hearted. A mighty world was before it, filled with all the greatness and charm of a splendid past, and the mystery and wonder of an unknown future. The wonder, the mystery, the splendour of this vision sent a thrill of awe and passionate courage through the ranks of the growing army. The thin stream of life, with its half-spent emotions and latent energies, flowing silently through the unknown and despised regions of the world, had, in the passing of the years, grown into a vast and swollen torrent, in which all the fierce passions, wild hopes, ambitious dreams, and sad longings of men were borne along on the stormy flood.

It was under such conditions as these that the Christian Church entered upon the new period which is marked by the culmination of the Gnostic Controversy, and the development of a more highly organized ecclesiastical constitution and more clearly defined theological ideas.

Gnosticism, which appears in the days of Justin Martyr only as an uneasy, restless struggle within the Church of elements which the Church did not recognize or fully appreciate, had reached in the time of Irenæus its most acute stage, and resulted in a clearly and well-defined battle between two forces which thoroughly understood themselves and were struggling for definite aims. Gnosticism wished to shape the Gospel into a system of philosophy, and the Church was fighting for the Christian life. It is not difficult to get a general view of the Gnostic movement and recognize the primary elements in it, but to gain a clear apprehension of all the details involved in it is not at present possible. If it was actually what the Fathers too often represent it to be, it is singular how it could have gained the influence which they attribute to it, and which it undoubtedly exercised. The material which we possess upon which to base an estimate is in most cases the statements of enemies, and these not always either perfectly just, generous, or intelligent ones. It is from the greatest of the Christian Fathers that we get the most adequate statements on this movement, which exercised such a profound influence upon the destinies of the Gospel. It is a

matter of note that the two great cities where intellectual culture survived longest and accomplished most, Antioch and Alexandria, were also the centres of Gnosticism and the homes of its most powerful teachers. These two cities were also the fountains of the highest and finest theological teaching of the Ancient Church. Another noticeable feature with reference to Gnosticism is that most of the distinctive theological ideas which differentiate the highly developed Church of the third and fourth centuries from the simplicity of the Apostolic Age, are first found coming into prominence among the Gnostics. We are not able now, and probably never will be able, to state all the contributions which Gnosticism directly and indirectly made to the thought and life of the Church, for the orthodox teachers appropriated much of the thought to their own use, or, rather, breathed it in as part of the intellectual atmosphere of their age. Again, they snatched the weapon from the hands of the enemies, and claimed as their own what were really trophies of their foes, on the ground "That to the victors belong the spoils." As the hostile and dominant Paganism had made organized and systematic attempts to suppress and destroy Christianity, so the Church, when it became strong enough, waged a relentless war upon all those enemies which had wrought for it so much mingled good and evil. The genuine religious zealot, no matter what his Creed, seems to have the same instinct. The captured territory is always burned over, ploughed

up, and sown with salt. The destruction is as complete as human ingenuity coupled with theological rancour can make it. One stone is not left upon another, but the broken fragments tell to the eye of the scientific investigator the story of the past in no uncertain language. The efforts of the Church to destroy all vestiges of this struggle are perfectly apparent, and are rather remarkable as showing how deeply incensed it was against its opponents. Though we have no evidence of any systematic attempts to accomplish this result during this period, the reason lay not in the different feelings which actuated the Church, but in its lack of power. The Church herself was on trial, and Christians were in the minority and could take no formal or legal steps to this end. But the means adopted later, traces of which are to be found in the Imperial Decrees, show a disposition which cannot have been absent in this period. The Church Fathers, with few exceptions, show the same feeling towards their heathen and Gnostic assailants, and it is not one which fills one with any pleasure. In some cases it borders upon ferocity. One of the first steps which Constantine took after the declarations of the Nicene Council was to issue a decree against Arius, and by implication against Porphyry, in which all the writings of the Arians are condemned to be burned, and sentence of death was pronounced against all who read them.[1]

[1] "Under Constantius and Constans a fierce attack was made on the controversial writings of the heathen. In the fifth century

As a consequence of this attitude, all which survives to us of the Gnostic writings is imbedded in the literature of these Church Fathers who were directly impelled to attack in a systematic and formal manner this subtle enemy of the Gospel. Yet the influence and effects of Gnosticism, or the struggle with it, are apparent on every page of the history of this period. The natural and spontaneous movement of thought in the Christian Church took a more scientific and philosophical form, and the outlines of those deep foundations were drawn which the succeeding generations were to lay. The opposition against the Gnostics strengthened itself by every means which lay within its reach, and the loose and disorganized mass of religious communities developed under the stress of battle into a solid and well-disciplined army under skilful and ardent leaders.

This Græco-Roman civilization, which on its Hellenic side so powerfully influenced the course

there was a fiery process against the writings of Nestorius, and hand in hand with it, a condemnation of the heathen writings, especially those of Porphyry. On Feb. 16, 448 A.D., the law was promulgated through the Emperors Theodosius and Valentinus: 'That all copies of Porphyry the Mad, likewise of the other opponents of Christianity, should be burned, for the turning away of the anger of God and the saving of their souls.' The completeness with which these efforts were crowned has left us only a few fragments of the Neoplatonic enemies of Christianity. Porphyry, Hierocles, and Julian are preserved to us only in the writings of the Christian Fathers, and their dates, like those of Celsus, cannot be precisely determined."—Theo. Keim, *Celsus's Wahres Wort*, S. 172–173.

and development of Christian thought and Christian institutions, on its Roman side also impressed itself most deeply upon the growing Church, and influenced most profoundly the interpretation of the Gospel, which was presented thus under new conditions to the life of the Empire.

A recent writer has emphasized the influence which the Roman administrative forms and ideas exercised upon the Christians in an entirely unconscious manner,[1] but has referred only indirectly to the effect which the dominant conceptions of the Roman mind had upon the shaping and expression of Christian thought.

That fundamental idea of the Gospel as the 'Nova Lex,' which, we have seen, appears in such an unmistakable yet indefinite form in the Epistle to Barnabas and almost all the other writers of the first half of this century, gradually extended and developed itself, until it controlled, not only the thought and life of the Church, but also naturally and inevitably shaped its expression and organization. In this new ideal, so comprehensively expressed, reaching so high and so far, touching the springs of human thought and ruling the most minute act of the life, extending itself, moreover, to every detail in the great organism—in this we have the ideal of the Græco-Roman world, the ideal of the Empire itself, the ideal of the Catholic Church, the ideal of Law. Lofty as this conception is, and no one will refuse it admiration, the real question is, whether it was greater than, or as great as,

[1] Ramsey, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 362.

the one it displaced or anticipated. To settle this question there is no need of abstract discussion. All that is necessary is to trace the effect of this conception upon the minds and hearts of men, and see its shaping influence in the practical ideal which was moulded in the stern struggle of years, and which shaped itself amid the strife of the centuries. Law and order, system and discipline, are undoubtedly the highest achievements which man can reach, but we must ask ourselves whether these external features of life cannot sometimes be bought at too high a price—at the price, namely, of that inward spiritual life which is the very essence and soul of man. Is not the highest form of spiritual liberty, in accordance with the highest law, the life of God Himself? and will not one who starts with the ideal of law rather than liberty, lean inevitably towards an external and mechanical conception of religion which ultimately ends in Legalism and Casuistry?

Law, in the sense of statute and ordinance, is not within the region and atmosphere of the highest expression of the life of man in the Gospel. The struggles in which the Church was engaged for so long a period strengthened this tendency, and in its ultimate expression we may say that, even more perfectly than the Empire itself, it set forth the Roman ideal of law. All the forces of the existing civilization which work for the preservation of the social order, were enlisted in the interests of the Church when its capacity was fairly appreciated. The conservative instincts of men, which are always

on the side of the past, brought out and re-enforced the old religious conception, and drew the new religion more into line with the past. Stamping upon it the prevalent ideal, that of law, it raised by this means a check against the spiritual anarchy which seemed to threaten all things men care for.

It is not a matter which admits of much debate, whether it would have been better that the Church should have clung to the ideal of life which the great Apostle to the Gentiles followed, or adopt the one which realized itself under the form of Catholicism. Such a discussion is altogether too academic. The fact is, she did accept, consciously or unconsciously, the latter mode of conceiving herself, her relations, her aims, and her duties; and we have simply to ask ourselves whether this ideal reveals itself as capable of meeting the issues and satisfying the needs of the spiritual life of man, not only in that distant past, but in this strange and momentous present.

It is in the age of Irenæus that we meet with the fully developed outlines of this new ideal. Law stamps itself over the whole broad surface of the Church's intellectual and spiritual domain. In the region of Christian thought the 'Regulæ Fidei' assume a position from which they were never removed during the whole period in which the Roman idea influenced the form of Christian teaching.

The bold, fresh thought of the Church was being slowly hemmed in, or, at least, boundaries were sought

for it; but it is of the immortal glory of man that he must think, whether his thinking is recognized or rejected. The test of his being is, as the great philosopher says, in this power to think. No age of the Church has ever passed without some accredited or unaccredited contributions of the mind of man to the sum of human thought, in spite of the restrictions under which intellectual activity has been placed by the legal idea of religion.

The 'Regulæ Fidei,' moreover, find their counterpart and natural accompaniment in the conception of practical life or the practical ideal, in which the spontaneous expression of religious feeling is, to a greater or less degree, superseded by a theory of duty and conduct which reduces the Gospel to a legal code or a religious ritual. Everywhere we find this coming more distinctly into view in the thought which contains the formative principles of the future. In the threefold aspect of life, thought, and organization we find the Church of the last half of the second century expressing most clearly and definitely the dominance of a certain conception and ideal which are legal, not spiritual—of law, not of liberty.

The relations which exist between men and their environment, or between the intellectual and spiritual resources of one age and the demands and activities of another, are not plain and simple, but complex and oftentimes obscure. To define precisely the scope of any particular influence, or to analyze the effect of any particular force, it is necessary to ascertain the conditions under which that influence or force was

operating. And it is only by its effects that we learn to distinguish between what may be called the abstract existence of a truth and the existence of that truth in the life and mind of a man. Therefore, in tracing out the relation between the theology of St. Paul as expressed in the practical ideal of the Christian life, and the age of Irenæus as reflected in the pages of that writer, it will be necessary to repeat, in part at least, the process adopted in the previous chapter—that is, we must ascertain, if possible, what relation this special line of thought bore to the recognized mode of thought at this time, or, at least, to that set forth in the writings of Irenæus.

The immense change which took place in the position of the literature which ultimately became what we call the New Testament, was emphasized, in the case of St. Paul's writings, by the special battle which was waged over them with Marcion. Yet, however great the change which we notice in one generation, and however relatively marked the advance over the past, as a matter of fact the settlement of the New Testament Canon was a slow process, and it advanced with very unequal speed in different localities, and was rather a result of the completer organization and consolidation of the Church, than of a recognition or full appreciation of the various portions which ultimately formed its contents. It is easy to be seen that when ideas on this subject were vague and fluid, it would be inevitable that the emphasis would be shifting since the meaning itself was uncertain. It is only when

the term itself, as well as the documents which it described, had become fixed and rigid, that we find that lack of colour and feeling in the use of this literature which is the clear mark of canonicity. Only when all the literature of the New Testament was to a large degree fixed and of equal value with the Old Testament, is it that we find that use of it as inspired and authoritative in every word, which is the true test of canonicity; and when Irenæus wrote, this age was still distant. In the most important centres of Church life there was still that absence of uniformity of expression on this subject, which shows the idea had not fully realized itself, even if it had been fully grasped by any. The idea of inspiration was already at hand in the Old Testament, and the growing sense of Apostolic authority was soon to be the distinguishing mark of a special literature, and, joined with the idea of inspiration, gave the dogmatic basis for a New Testament Canon.

In the earlier part of this period we have the current thought of the great Antiochian Church on this subject set before us in the writings of its Bishop, Theophilus. He, however, does not know any literature of the Christian Church which is of equal value and regarded in the same light as the Old Testament, unless it is the Four Gospels,[1] and any evidence that the Pauline literature was in the same rank with these is entirely wanting.

If we turn now to the African Church, leaving

[1] Harnack, *Das Neue Test. um das Jahr* 200, S. 41–42.

the great Alexandrians to be treated of in another place, we find a curious illustration of the development of the New Testament Canon, and how, in a remote and distant place, the literature which has held its position in the esteem of Christians for so many ages was slowly building itself into the reverence and regard of the Church. In the records of the trial of the Scillitan Martyrs there is apparently a sharp distinction between the 'Scriptures' or 'Holy Books' and the letters of St. Paul. The efforts of Zahn and Sanday to invalidate the argument for the slow development of the Canon, drawn from this fact by a reinterpretation of it, do not by any means appear to be satisfactory.[1]

In the Church at Rome, which at this time had risen to a place in the Western World from which it never has been displaced, the most important document which we have for this period is without much dispute the Muratorian Fragment or Canon. The date has been much disputed, but it is admitted by all to belong to the latter half of the second century, and was without much doubt written at Rome—whether originally in Latin or Greek seems still open to debate.[2] While the writer does not

[1] *Acta Martyrum Scilanorum Græci:*

Αἱ καθ' ἡμᾶς βίβλοι καὶ αἱ πρὸς
Ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐπιστολαὶ Παύλου
Τοῦ ὁσιου ἀνδρός.—6ª, 7. A.D. 180.

[2] Date of Muratorian Fragment:—Tischendorf, 160–170; Wieseler and Westcott, 170; Credner and Harnack, 170–190; Holtzmann, 190; Volkmar, 199–200; Hilgenfeld, time of Irenæus; Keim, time of Tertullian.

apply the title Scriptures to the Epistles of St. Paul, he evidently wishes them to be regarded as of high authority, although he feels that it is necessary for him to justify the position he assigns to them. In consequence, he dwells upon the fact that the Apostle wrote to Seven Churches, and as seven is a sacred number, it must be mystically interpreted. He finds in this number the guarantee of the Catholicity of the Epistles which is necessary to commend them to a canonical position. The Canon of the New Testament is manifestly here, however many limitations it is necessary to make, and they are not few.[1]

Although the Muratorian author does not use the term 'Canon of the New Testament' or 'Holy Scriptures' as applied to these writings, yet at this time, and possibly earlier, the latter term had been applied to writings which were of high antiquity or Apostolic origin. As, for instance, Irenæus speaks of the Shepherd of Hermas as 'Scripture.' The very term, however, of 'Holy Apostle,' indicating a special honour and reverence, was not used as a distinctive title for the individuals of what is commonly called the Apostolic College until the third century.[2] From this, one might reasonably infer that the personal authority of the writers of the New Testament literature was not at this period a fully developed idea. We see the growth of the

[1] Dr. Harnack thinks, however, that there was no Canon of the New Testament at Rome before 200 A.D., *Theolog. Literaturzeitung*, 188, S. 643.

[2] Eusebius, *H. E.*, iii. 32.

canonical idea in the gradual change which is taking place in the estimate which is being put upon the various books of the New Testament, and also of the earlier Christian literature, aside from that which is now regarded as canonical. Many of the books which were highly regarded at an earlier period are now being neglected or rejected, and the local attachment for particular books, which held but an inferior position in other places, became a means of lifting them, by the growing sense of unity throughout the Church, into a prominence which they had occupied only in the narrow territory of their earlier field.

The Church of the East, possibly Jerusalem, offered as its contribution to the new Canon the Epistle of St. James. Alexandria had preserved the Epistle to the Hebrews, and now handed it into the larger keeping of the Church Catholic. The Apocalypse, that strangest of all the books in the New Testament Canon, was saved by the stubborn feeling of the West, which was probably feeling more than anything else, for the West was not strong in scholarship or learning.[1] By this gradual process a collection of books was formed, the several parts of which enjoyed special consideration in different localities; but the whole collection did not universally attain the distinction which belonged in different degrees to the different members of it for nearly a century more. For a long time books which are now called extracanonical were used with great freedom at Alexandria, which shows how weak

[1] Sanday, *Inspiration*, pp. 24–25.

the canonical sentiment was, with respect at least to the Christian literature, in this, the birthplace of the Septuagint, the home of Philo, and the fountain of all Biblical learning for centuries.

When we turn to Asia Minor and Gaul, we may accept Irenæus as representative of the current thought in these so widely separated localities, for his attachment to the East must be accepted as a guarantee that he clings closely to the traditions which prevail in the East. In examining his writings on this point, we discover that he recognizes not only the existence, but the authority, of the writings at present included in our Canon of the New Testament. The old language, however, which appeared in Justin and Papias about the 'Eye and Ear Witnesses' is no longer found, but the authority of the Apostolic literature is based upon the same ground as that of the Old Testament.[1]

He uses the term 'Scriptures' without strictly defining what is included in it, but he applies it to Evangelical and Apostolic writings, and evidently regards them as co-ordinate authority with the Old Testament.[2] What books are included, however, in these Scriptures can be ascertained from the different references which he makes to them. He accepts the Four Gospels on the ground of their historical character, but justifies this acceptance for

[1] Iren., *Ad. Her.*, iii. 16, 2 ; H. J. Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der Historisch-Kritischen Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, S. 149.

[2] *Ad. Her.*, B. iii. 1.

mystical reasons, upon which he dwells at some length.[1]

It is noticeable that while Irenæus uses the Epistles of St. Paul with great frequency, there seems to be a distinction in his own mind which affects the manner in which he regards them. Yet nowhere does he dwell upon the difference which he seems to feel rather than consciously recognize. While he seems to make a constant use of the Epistles, at the same time he does not make any reference to a collection of Pauline Epistles standing side by side with the Four Gospels, and of equal value and authority with them. The process, however, by which they became canonical has already begun in Irenæus, but it is not by any means complete or advanced to such a stage that positive statements, except those of the most general kind, can be made. It has been conjectured that the necessity which Irenæus felt of reclaiming St. Paul from the Gnostics compelled him to use the Epistles as canonical or authoritative Scriptures, although previously they had only been highly regarded as literary relics of the great Apostle. The fact also that the Epistles were of local character would, in the days of the growing Catholic idea of the Church, be unfavourable to their full reception as authoritative for the Church Universal. The attempt which Irenæus made to avoid this difficulty or to meet it is clearly an indication that he felt it to be such. In addition to this is the fact that the Pauline

[1] *Ad. Her.*, B. iii. 11, 8.

literature was in the form of letters, which was a very common mode of literary expression among the Pagans, and would therefore necessitate their being recognized and appreciated, partially at least, on their real merits before they would be accepted on other grounds, or their authority recognized as Apostolic and canonical. The particular mode of introduction which all Jewish and Christian writers used when quoting the Old Testament, and which the majority of Christian writers at this period also used with regard to the Four Gospels—that is, 'Scriptures' or 'Holy Scriptures'—is nowhere used by Irenæus in quoting St. Paul. This is more important, since the number of citations which he made from the Apostle has been estimated as high as 324.[1]

These distinctions can undoubtedly be pressed too far if one forgets that this was a transition period, and the sentiment and feeling which go before and create the practice or shape the expression were already present. While the future of the Canon was clearly foreshadowed by the present practice, the conditions which surround the beginning of

[1] Während also die A. Tliche Citate solenn mit 'Scriptura ait' eingeführt werden, auch solche aus Schriften des neues Bundes mit diesen und ähnlichen Formeln, bei den Evangelien dieselben bereits durch den gleich solennen Titel Evangelium verdrängt sind, findet sich nicht ein einziges Paulus Citat in solenner einführungs Form. Keines dieser 206 Citate ist als 'Scriptura ait,' oder ähnlich eingeleitet.—J. Werner, *Der Paulinismus der Irenæus*, S. 28; Harnack, Gebhardt, und Zahn, *Altchristliche Literatur*, B. vi., 1889.

this, and which to a very considerable extent still survived, would make their influence felt.

That the position of the Epistles of St. Paul as canonical was still far from universally conceded, can be seen from the attitude which one party or element in the Church still maintained towards him. The Clementines indicate the presence in the Church of the original Jewish element which was of necessity hostile to St. Paul. The Homilies belong to the second half of the second century, and the Recognitions probably to the last quarter. The bitter feeling displayed in them against Marcionism has its origin, not simply in the growing legalism of the Church, but springs from a distinctly Jewish source—that is, the author is a member of the early Jewish-Christian party which had not yet been rejected by the Church. If, as Baur thinks, the Clementines proceeded from Rome, they show that in the Church of the chief city of the Empire there was, in the last half of the second century, a strongly Jewish and legalistic party which looked with undisguised dislike upon St. Paul. The term '*ὁ ἐχθρός*' unquestionably refers to St. Paul, and it is not asserting too much to claim that in these writings there is a covert attack upon him. If there did exist such a feeling at Rome, Irenæus may have known of it, and, as a consequence, had his attitude towards St. Paul in some degree affected by it. However, in the absence of all positive evidence in favour of such an opinion, it must be regarded as simply a conjecture which has no indisputable ground for its basis.

An undoubted influence, however, was exerted upon the position of the Pauline literature and the development of the New Testament Canon as a whole, at one period retarding and at another advancing it, by an authority which was originally of paramount importance—that is, Catholic Tradition. At first it preceded the New Testament literature in importance, but later was placed side by side with it as a basis of authority and doctrine, yet in reality retaining its earlier authority as a principle of interpretation and guidance.

It seems to be assumed by many that the idea and authority of tradition are original with the Christian Church, but a slight examination of the facts will reveal how erroneous this view is. In the writings of Irenæus and the Christian literature of this age tradition is mentioned with much frequency and emphasis, and may be said to have been first asserted as an established and unquestioned authority in the Christian Church in this period. The root of its influence undoubtedly lay in the human sympathy which is its underlying basis, and by which each age and each individual is bound in the living unity of the race. What tradition was to the man of the Ancient World we cannot fully understand unless we see it from his standpoint. To the man of the Modern World it still exists, but in a very different form, and he regards it as always open to criticism. It embodies itself in the mass of history, theory, speculation, practice, faith, and fact, which form the total of what we call Christianity. The distinction

between the original Gospel and Christianity as it now is, is, to a degree at least, the distinction between the primary and original facts and the body of interpretation which has accumulated around them, and which with some qualifications corresponds, in the position which it now holds, to the original sense of the word Tradition. Another element of difference between the Modern World and the Ancient World in this respect is the degree to which these traditions have embodied themselves in written documents, and become the basis of theological systems and living communities. In the Ancient World the unwritten tradition was the foundation of all the schools and parties. In the earliest history oral tradition supplied the place of literature, and was the living expression of a people's consciousness, especially of its religious consciousness, whose continuity forms the noblest life of the race.

The more this tradition was developed and expressed, the more it was appealed to, the greater became its influence. The result naturally was that the body of tradition would grow as the living thought and experience of each generation was embodied in it, until the original and primitive basis, be it oral or documentary, was completely overlaid. The importance attached to tradition was consequently not confined to any one subject or any one nation. Every reader or student of the Gospels knows the part which the Jewish schools, which were the conservators of the sacred tradition, played in the interpretation of the law. The hair-splitting casuistry

of the Scribes and Pharisees, which seems to us so puerile and revolting, rested for its authority upon the traditions of the school, which were received, not only without hesitation, but with the profoundest reverence. But the extent to which tradition was elaborated, and the authority which was attributed to it among the Jews, is not fully realized even by a study of the New Testament. It is only when the Talmud, which is the embodiment of Jewish tradition, has been examined, that we see to what extent the mind of the devout Jew was brought in bondage to this influence. As is well known, Judaism after the Restoration became a 'Religion of a Book,' but even this does not fully describe the situation, for the natural tendency of a legally conceived religion is to extend the code to the most minute detail of life and worship. As the book by no means covered all these points by positive enactment, it was in this respect supplemented by traditions or comments, which were supposed to be merely an extension or expansion of that which was implicitly involved in the 'Thora.' This 'Oral Law' took its place beside the 'Written Law,' and was regarded as of equal authority.[1]

The belief as to its origin was that it had been taught to Moses by Jehovah in the Mount, and this belief was undoubtedly re-enforced and guaranteed by the value attached to the traditions or 'Lex Oralis,' and its special adaptation to solve some of the most pressing problems of Jewish life. When

[1] Weber, *Die Lehren des Talmud*, S. 88.

Jehovah gave Moses the Thora, He also gave him the interpretation of it—that is, the 'Lex Oralis.'[1] Fundamentally there is no real distinction between the Scriptures and Tradition. The principle at the root in both cases is the same, for the one is contained essentially in the other. Tradition is, in reality, Revelation—the continuation and extension of the original revelation of the Law.[2] While abstractly and theoretically the Scriptures had a higher value than Tradition, yet in practice the Oral Law was all-important, as it invariably is, and it was by this men's conduct was governed and their standing defined.[3] Not only were transgressions of tradition visited by the punishment on the part of the religious authorities, but were also supposed to involve the heaviest divine condemnation. More than this, by a strange perversion opposition to the oral tradition was regarded as a heavier transgression than disobedience to the decrees of the Thora.[4] In fact, the Jewish saint would rather die than violate the traditional law, for this was regarded as, in reality, higher and holier than the simple words of Scripture.[5] The Jewish Christians naturally were influenced by the temper and mental predisposition of the people to which they belonged. The literature of the Christian Church in the second century

[1] Weber, *Die Lehren des Talmud*, S. 89.

[2] *Ibid.*, S. 96. [3] *Ibid.*, S. 192.

[4] Schurer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, ii. div. 1, p. 334 (Eng. Trans.).

[5] Weber, S. 105.

is full of illustrations of how powerfully the old impulse was working under the new conditions. A striking example is furnished by the Clementines, which undoubtedly sprang from a Jewish-Christian source. That the Jewish party in the Church was responsible for the survival of the influence of the idea of tradition and the source of its renewed strength, would, however, be a false assumption. Any such idea is due to a misunderstanding of the extent and depth of the habit of mind out of which tradition sprung, and from which it derived its strength and authority. The Christian Church rejected any intentional acceptance of Jewish tradition; yet the naïve repudiation of Rabbinical tradition, and the blind acceptance of patristic authority by Christian teachers, has been one of the paradoxes of ecclesiastical history.

Science and philosophy in the Pagan World paid the same respect to Tradition as was given in the Jewish World. Oral tradition, in the absence of printed books and the scarcity of manuscripts, would naturally be of extraordinary value, and the various schools of philosophy and science transmitted their doctrines by this means. It was likewise the case with religious teaching, and led in many cases to a secret doctrine, which was transmitted by the initiated from one class to another. Among the philosophical schools the Pythagoreans in particular laid the greatest emphasis upon their secret doctrine. The mysteries of the Greek religions were characterized by the same feature, and the Ancient World in

all its various sections was thoroughly familiar with the conception of exoteric and esoteric traditions. The influence of this idea upon the modes of thought of the more learned and intelligent Christians appears in the writings of the greatest teachers of this age, and pre-eminently in Clement of Alexandria and Origen. The mention of these suggests the most probable solution of the way the theory of tradition passed into, and was domesticated in, the Christian Church, although it is hard to see how under the circumstances it could have been excluded. As a practice or habit of mind it was perfectly natural, but to give it a dogmatic shape is something different, and implies a self-consciousness and a purpose whose origin is suggestive of the way the mind of the Church was working, and throws a great deal of light upon some of the phases of the intellectual history of the Church of this age. We cannot attribute this introduction to the influence of the Jewish party in the Church, for after the fall of Jerusalem this was of less and less account, and the great streams of thought and habit were not likely to be profoundly affected, in their details at least, by such a remote influence as this. In the living centre, where the largest and swiftest currents of the higher intellectual life of the age met and combined —that is, in Alexandria—we find the first hints of the emphasis which was afterwards laid upon Christian tradition as an authority beside and above the documentary evidence or teaching of the Christian Church. The Gnostics, since they were men for

the most part of superior cultivation and learning, adopted the methods used in both Jewish and Pagan schools, and based their systems upon teachings which they claimed had been transmitted to them by tradition. It was by this tradition they justified their position. They claimed to have received it from different Apostles and Apostolic teachers, and great stress was laid upon St. Paul. When they were confronted by the opposition between their views and the public teaching of the Church, they took refuge in the theory of a secret tradition by which they endeavoured to defend themselves, and also appealed to the Epistles of St. Paul. By this appeal they undoubtedly gave greater publicity, and created a demand for the writings which were to be in the end one of the instruments of their own destruction.[1]

When a Christian teacher, trained in the methods which prevailed to such a high degree in the Gnostic schools, went out in defence of the Church, he fought with these arms; and where Gnosticism reached its highest development, there also it left, in this respect at least, the most distinct traces of its influence. The most distinguished teachers of Alexandria accepted and asserted the theory of a secret tradition.[2]

It is to Irenæus, however, more probably than to any other Church writer of this period, that it is due

[1] Rothe, *Vorlesungen über Kirchengeschichte*, B. i. S. 135.

[2] *Vid.* Origen on Ezek. ii. 9, and the experience of St. Paul to which he refers in 2 Cor. xii. 4; Baur, *Vorlesungen über Dogmengeschichte*, B. i. S. 374–375.

that tradition was erected into a great, if not the greatest, authority in the Church. He appeals to it as a long-recognized and long-established authority, and we can accept his position as representative of the opinions current on this subject in this period. Tradition, as the original form of the teaching of the Church, was regarded as of undisputed authority. It was practically independent and above the Scriptures, for while they were regarded as of co-ordinate authority, yet, in fact, since they could only be interpreted in the light of tradition, they really occupied an inferior position as norms of influence. Tradition itself was the actual principle of knowledge.[1] The real principle of interpretation, therefore, was tradition which has its basis, not in the common historical and grammatical principles which lie at the foundation of all literary interpretation, but in what is supposed to be the common, ancient, and universal belief of the Christian communities. But if tradition is necessary to the proper understanding of Scriptures, who shall interpret the tradition? Quis custodiat custodes? The whole process is but arguing in a vicious circle, from which there is no escape except by the path of science and reason, or through some authority which supersedes all intellectual and spiritual functions except obedience. To Irenæus, however, the authority of tradition was paramount and final, and he saw in the Church, to whom this

[1] Dr. Martin Winkler, *Der Traditionsbegriff des Urchristenthum*, S. 63.

tradition had been entrusted, the ultimate ground, source, and fountain of all religious knowledge.[1]

As a consequence, the Canon of the New Testament, which was still in almost an embryonic form, was, on account of its later origin and less decisive influence, placed in a subordinate position. This was not done deliberately or for the purpose of minimizing the Apostolic writings, but unconsciously, for they were interpreted in the light of the present and under the influence of the traditions already in authority.

This Apostolic tradition, for such it was supposed to be, had, on the other hand, its unchangeable accuracy guaranteed by the Holy Scriptures, and consequently took precedence of all other authorities. The assumption which lay beneath this position was one which would not be credited for a moment in the light of historical methods and historical criticism, but which then passed unquestioned, and has impressed itself so deeply upon the mind and history of the Church, that it is not even stated by many writers, and yet is of enormous importance from any point of view. This assumption is, that the oral form of teaching by which the Gospel was first spread, and which for a long time

[1] "Die Tradition ist also dem Irenäeus das an und für sich vollkommen zureichende, alles Wesentliche in sich begreifende, allgemein bekannte die Schrift erganzende und ihre Auslegung regelnde Prinzip der christlichen Heilserkenntnis, welches eben wegen dieser Eigenschaften unbedingte Autoritat in Anspruch nehmen must." — Ziegler, *Iren.*, S. 27, quoted by Winkler, S. 80.

was the only means by which it was disseminated, was necessarily exempt from all the injurious and foreign elements which mingle with the stream of ordinary historical development. This silent assumption, which was a postulate of the writers of this period, is, as has well been said, without any justification.[1] To dispute or criticize this theory has always been regarded by its advocates as the impudence of rationalism or the arrogance of unbelief. It was asserted that the value of tradition and its actual superiority over Scripture was attested by the fact that while the Gnostics might, and undoubtedly did, use the latter, yet the true tradition which was the key to the interpretation of it was only known to those who belonged to the Catholic Church, to which had been given this inheritance.[2] The Apostolic writings were referred to, not for the purpose of correcting any changes which might have taken place in men's thoughts of the Gospel, or even for the purpose of ascertaining what the original teachings of the first preachers of the Gospel were, but simply to show that the Apostles were in entire agreement with the Church. The assumption was, not that the Church should guide itself by the teachings of the Apostles, but that the Apostles must have taught as the Church then taught. It is an assumption which still prevails in many quarters, and covers up a vast multitude of historical difficulties. The effect of it was, in the period we

[1] Herzog, *Real-Encyk.*, I. Aus., B. xvi. S. 283.

[2] Iren., *Ad. Her.*, B. iii. 4, 1.

are studying, that the orthodox teachers in a mass recognized no real distinction as existing between Scripture and tradition, and assumed that their contents were identical. More than that, since tradition expressed the ideas with which they were most familiar, they inevitably laid the stress upon it, and the Scriptures consequently were lessened in value because inevitably lessened in influence. This was unavoidable when such a guide was at hand to point the way and settle all disputes. Moreover, the growing strength of the organization would furnish a living and powerful authority to extend and strengthen the influence of tradition, and which led, not to an actual disregard of the Scriptures, but lessened the sense of its supreme importance for a basis from which to verify the data of the Christian consciousness. Ultimately, when there was a tendency to oppose Scripture to tradition, the vast majority of the Church teachers, with the exception of the Antiochan school, held that the Scriptures could only be interpreted by means of tradition. They thus took a subordinate place, and their proper claims could not be established until tradition was recognized, not as co-ordinate authority with them, but merely as the expression of certain theological or historical opinions which need not be accepted without thorough investigation.

A cardinal instance is offered by Irenæus, both as to the value of tradition in its most attractive and reliable form, and also of the way men regarded and used it in this age. Irenæus states that Jesus

lived to be near the age of fifty years. He asserts that this information was given by St. John to those who were intimate with him in Asia. Some of these "Disciples of the Lord saw not only John but the other Apostles also, and heard the very same account from them." Here is a direct and positive statement made by one who was but one generation removed from the last of the Apostles, and was a friend and pupil of Polycarp, the friend of St. John. Yet this testimony, so direct, so positive, so clear, is practically of no value in the face of other evidence. It would be difficult to find a scholar who would accept this tradition as decisive on this point. The use Irenæus makes of Scripture in this case shows plainly that his mind had been preoccupied by another authority and influence than Scripture. He states the tradition, and then introduces the passage John vii. 56, 57, as proof. He does not examine the Evangelical history, but simply assumes the authority of the tradition. In his mind, in this instance at least, tradition is the leading idea and Scripture the subordinate. While this mode of regarding it is not in every instance sharply defined, nor perhaps the universal method or attitude, and while Irenæus attaches the greatest importance to Scripture, yet the way in which the two are related in his thought is set forth again and again. It may be overstating it to assert that he set it forth as a theological proposition, yet practically he stood upon the ground of the authority of the traditions of the

Catholic Church as the basis of all Scripture interpretation. The material of the later affirmations of the Catholic Church are plainly in sight, and the development has begun. The method of the future is here, and the method of Irenæus is the Dogma of Trent.[1]

It is perfectly obvious that under such conditions as these the development of the New Testament Canon would be affected in many ways, and the estimate of these writings would also be modified in many respects.

Other factors contributed to change the estimate of the Apostles' writings by changing the historical perspective. The idea of the solidarity of the Apostolate was fast becoming one of the historical tenets of the Church, and, swayed by this idea, Irenæus regards St. Paul and the other Apostles as occupying the same point of view and being in entire harmony with each other.[2] Such a conception is obviously not the result of historical insight or criticism, but of dogmatic preconceptions which have their origin in the ideas which were shaping the organization of the Church. The interest which Irenæus has in him seems not to indicate any appreciation of his thought or any recognition of his historical position. The great Missionary of the Gentile world does not appeal to him. He regards him chiefly as a member of the Apostolate, which is

[1] *Conc. Trid.*, Sess. 4; *Cat. Rom. Præf.*, 12; *Belarmini de Verbo Dei*, iv. 3.

[2] *Ad. Her.*, iii. 13, 1.

endowed with special authority. His feelings are purely formal, conventional, and, if you will, ecclesiastical, inspired by certain dogmatic and anti-Gnostic motives.[1]

If, now turning from the study of the social conditions and the ecclesiastical movement which was then in progress, and the intellectual atmosphere which surrounded Irenæus, we examine his writings with reference to the points of St. Paul's theology upon which his whole ideal of life rested, we find some very wide differences in the way these fundamental conceptions were regarded. The lines of thought on this most vital point of life are by no means so deeply thought out or so clearly expressed in Irenæus as in St. Paul. His was not a profound nature nor an intellect of wide grasp or intense activity. Nor was his mind either systematic or analytic in any large degree. In some of his intellectual features he appears inferior to Justin Martyr. He does not state the primary truths of his Christian consciousness with any definiteness, except the initial one of the revelation of Jesus Christ. The emphasis which he lays upon the articles of the Regulæ Fidei would seem to controvert this statement, but these are set forth rather as the objective truths of the Church than the living affirmations of his own spiritual life.

It remains now to examine somewhat in detail the circle of thought within which the mind of Irenæus moved, and the particular interpretation which he

[1] Werner, S. 105.

gave to some of the most profoundly practical ideas of the Gospel. To do this, moreover, in particular with reference to those great truths which shaped the thought of life, which stirred the soul of St. Paul and gave such originality and power to his teaching.

Irenæus was born in the East and reared upon the traditions which are associated with the name of St. John. When a very young man, he tells us, he was a pupil of Polycarp, the disciple of that Apostle. For what reasons he came to the West we do not know, but at last he found his home and his work in the Christian community of the Greek city of Lyons in Gaul. The situation, together with his own experience, contributed, no doubt, to foster that spirit of conciliation and that desire for harmony which are characteristic features of his disposition. No more than of Justin Martyr can we say that he was a man of striking intellectual gifts or that insight which rises to genius. He represents a type whose virtues have gone far to justify their limitations or defects in the mind of the average man, for his virtues are such as all can appreciate, and his limitations those which are not immediately obvious. He received and retained the stamp of his age, and gave back only what he had received. The mastery of the age and of his environment were complete, for, as has been said of him, "Although he wrote in the language of the Greek, he thought in the spirit of the Roman."

The character of the man is revealed in a work which is evidently representative of his strongest

and most careful thought—his great treatise *Against the Heresies.* It is directed more particularly against Valentinus and the Valentinians, although other heretical sects are referred to. To-day some of the most critical and profound students of church history regard Valentinus as one of the most powerful minds of the second century, and, with all his blunders and misconceptions, in much of what he said, and more in what he aimed at, he bears out this estimate of him. Yet, as seen in the work of Irenæus, the system of Valentinus seems but a mass of puerilities and absurdities woven in with wild, grotesque speculations. The vast majority of men see things as they wish to see them or as they are disposed to see them, not as they actually are; and the excess of intellectual activity and speculation in this age, clothed, as it was, in such obscure symbolism, created a profound antipathy in the minds of the vast majority of simple, earnest, Christian teachers. The instinct of the Church, its loyalty to Christ, led inevitably to a dislike of speculation on the part of practical men, and hence some of the feeling with which Irenæus attacked the Gnostics was the result of the resentment which he felt towards the habits of thought as represented by them, as well as the perception of the danger contained in this vague and unbalanced theorizing.

Towards those elements of his Christian consciousness, which formed the working force by which his practical ideal was to be attained in the mind of the Apostle, we find Irenæus standing in quite a differ-

ent relation. The passionate language of St. Paul on the subject of sin has disappeared. Irenæus occupies quite a different attitude. Sin is not, or does not seem to be to him, that feeling of personal guilt which estranges the human heart from the love of God and separates the soul from the centre of its being. It consists mainly in a general sense of oppression and weakness, which are a result of a loss of that original knowledge and power of freedom by which man was enabled to gain the divine rewards. The sense of bondage, however, does not seem to be inherent in this consciousness. The primary and absolute freedom of the will never seems to be in the slightest degree doubted, although this problem was not probed to its depths by Irenæus or any other of the Greek Fathers. More than that, this side of their Christian consciousness was not, and perhaps could not be, developed with any fulness in the face of inherited misconceptions. This acute consciousness of sin which in St. Paul had not only a moral but primarily a religious character, seems vague and unsatisfactory in Irenæus. The language is conventional rather than personal. He does not even view the problem from the deep ethical ground of the Hebrew. In saying, however, that he was defective in his ethical sense is by no means to make him a conspicuous exception. This deficiency is characteristic of most of the Greek theologians. Not that the moral element was absent from their natures, or that it was slurred over in their thinking; but the subject of sin was looked at and treated too much

from the intellectual, rather than the moral and religious or Christian, point of view. It was considered too exclusively as privative in its character—that is, the loss of one of the elements necessary to man's constitution as a son of God, the absence of that perfect knowledge of the good which they believed was the essence and aim of Christ's Revelation. This point of view was characteristically Greek, and the greatest names among the teachers of the past could be used in justification of it. It was the profound belief of the Greek thinker that sin was a result of ignorance, and this intellectual optimism lay at the base of all their failures to give an adequate expression to the fact which the Gospel alone was able to truly interpret. As a result, the highest demands of the redeemed nature of man could not be recognized until the inherited thought of the past with all its imperfections was subordinated to the higher passion and truth of the Christian consciousness.

Those among the Greeks who seemed to have the deepest appreciation of the ethical problems of life and felt them most keenly were the Gnostics, and especially Basilides and Valentinus; yet in these very instances were revealed the defects of their qualities. The conclusions reached by them were practically the same as those reached by Augustine nearly three centuries later. Both the Gnostics and Augustine took liberties with some of the fundamental truths involved in the Incarnation, and destroyed the wide and universal character of Christ's redemption. The Gnostics had identified sin and matter,

and asserted most vehemently the spirituality of God. In order to preserve Him from any contact with this dark, gross substance, they separated Him so completely from the world, that there was no actual salvation for man through Christ possible for any save the few who had risen above, and escaped from, the world. Augustine, on the other hand, in his deep consciousness of sin, separated man so completely from God that no point of contact between the two was left. Both the Gnostic and Augustine had to introduce an arbitrary doctrine of election in order that salvation might be realized by any.

That Irenæus did not feel about sin as St. Paul had felt is also shown by the way in which he understood the divine forgiveness. In the mind of St. Paul forgiveness is the revelation to him, not only of his own sin, but of the redeeming love and the power it has to banish the element or elements in his nature which alienate him from God. The sense of forgiveness includes in it the consciousness of a change of heart and a reconciliation with God. The depth of this conception or consciousness was such that St. Paul, resting on his own inner experience, found the full satisfaction of all his spiritual hopes and the perfect blessedness of life in the fulness of the divine forgiveness. In Irenæus the thought is far more superficial and meagre. In the first place, it simply means the taking away of the sense of oppression which has rested so heavily upon the human soul, and the restoration of the original fulness of choice which is the note of man's primitive state. Forgiveness is

not a state which is an end in itself and contains the full satisfaction of the spiritual nature. This is an idea which does not seem to have had any history, in this connection at least, if at all, in the early Church. Rather is it only a position of vantage from which a future blessedness may be attained, and even that has all the problematic qualities which belong to a future event, for it was chiefly as a temporal event that the results of the forgiveness of sins were regarded. Its contents seem to have been exhausted in this estimate of it as a purely historical fact. The idea of St. Paul that we are dead and buried with Christ in baptism, which is the representative or historical act subsequent to, and testifying of, a spiritual experience, from which we rise as new creatures in Christ, in Irenæus takes a different form. Baptism is the washing away of sin and the restoration of the soul to its original freedom of choice. Thus, forgiveness is an historical event in the life of man which can be referred to a special act in time ; and more than that, it is limited by this condition of time. It is not a religious fact or factor primarily in man's spiritual life. It has reference rather to his external condition than to his internal state.[1]

The radical difference between St. Paul and Irenæus on this fundamental idea of the Gospel is

[1] "Die Sünde vergebung ist bei Iren. aus einer religiosen Tatsache zu einem historischen Ereigniss im Leben des Menschen geworden. Sie ist ein maliger Act den der Mensch erleidet, nicht eine stete Gottestat die er immer von neuem in ihrer beseligenden Kraft wieder erfahrt."—Werner, S. 144.

revealed in a striking light in those details of the practical Church life of this period which came into prominence on account of this underlying difference. In the attitude of the Church towards sins committed after baptism, we see not only a new conception of the Sacrament and the outlines of the later doctrine of this subject, but also a side light, although a very powerful one, on the subject of sin and forgiveness, which is widely divergent from the Apostolic Age. Sins were considered as single acts, and those which were committed after baptism remained unforgiven, for Christ had not died for them. His forgiveness, so it was conceived, did not extend to the post-baptismal territory of man's life.[1] For the baptized Christian who sins there is no forgiveness, only punishment—not grace, but judgment with all its terrors.[2] What hideous fears this thought inspired, and how much more terrible the Gospel of the Son of God became to men than ever the stern denunciations of the Law had been, the later ages of Christian history only too plainly show. The root of this mode of thought lay, not in a deeper conception of sin as has sometimes been asserted, but in a more superficial idea not only of man's guilt but, what is of far more importance, of Christ's love and God's forgiveness. It was sins, not sin, which men were taught to fear; and the formal act, not the inward and spiritual renunciation, which they were led to emphasize. Sin was a new idea to the heathen world. Misery, unhappiness, and wrongdoing were all

[1] *Ad. Her.*, iv. 27, 2. [2] *Ibid.*, ix. 27, 2.

familiar, but the depths of spiritual opposition and the inner repulsion to the holiness of God and the perfection of Christ were not realized by the men of this generation. Depths of sorrow and long and passionate struggles were passed through before the soul of man stood again on the height from which that passionate cry of self-loathing and adoration went up from the lips of the Apostle to Him who had died for him.

Turning now to the next idea which lay at the foundation of the Apostle's conception of the spiritual life—that of law and the relation of the Christian soul to it—we find no change in the point of view which Irenæus takes from that of the preceding generation. The conception of the Gospel as the 'Nova Lex,' which appears on the very threshold of this century, is not challenged by him and his age, but rather accepted and even enlarged. In the post-Apostolic Age the legalism was limited to the moral life of the Christian, but in this age it was applied to organization and dogma as well, and became the dominant note of the period.[1] The Church was fighting against the Gnostics, who denied not only the value of the old covenant, but also any relation whatever between it and the new. They introduced a dualism into history which the Church teachers felt compelled to combat. These latter insisted upon a truth which the Gnostics had failed to appreciate, and that was the historical continuity existing between the old and the new covenants,

[1] R. A. Lipsius, *Die Zeit des Irenæus*, S. 281.

and the relation between them. The Church teachers, on the other hand, failed to see in what this continuity precisely consisted, and interpreted the historical unity as a religious one. By so doing, they lost sight of the essential originality of the new covenant in its spiritual interpretation of life and its religious significance.

There is at times an apparent resemblance between the point of view which Irenæus occupied towards the law or legal idea and that of St. Paul, but it is more apparent than real. "The hands are the hands of Esau, but the voice is the voice of Jacob." St. Paul regards the law as superseded as an element in the religious development of mankind. Irenæus seems to adopt the same point of view, but in reality he regards the law as represented not by the idea, but by the ceremonial regulations of the Mosaic Code. The moral law is not involved in this historical supersession, and the moral law is the essence of the Gospel, as it was of the Mosaic Dispensation. On the other hand, Irenæus insists upon the novelty of the Gospel; but when we seek to discover in what this novelty consists, we do not find that it is the abrogation of the law and the establishment of a religious, spiritual, and filial relation, but in some purely historical and external phenomena which of themselves do not contain any principle of spiritual life. The new is only an enlargement of the old—an enlargement which, from the Gentile point of view, was absolutely necessary, and which was an underlying assumption throughout the whole

Gentile Church. The three chief points in which Irenæus finds that Christ has made additions to the old law are these:—(1) the Universalism of the Gospel, which, as before stated, was a necessary Gentile postulate; (2) Faith in the Coming of Christ; (3) in the Sharpening and Emphasizing of the Demands of the Moral Life.[1] In this method of interpreting the Gospel lay not only the secret of the power of the Church's organization, but it shaped also the special development of the Church life, which was practically reduced to a code of law with its rewards and punishments. Religion became more and more objective in conformity with the tendency of thought and life, and the growing asceticism found a home and support under the roof of the Church. The identification of asceticism with the religious life did not take place in this age, but the seed was planted. The distinction was growing up between an universal and special morality, between holiness and virtue—a distinction which has no ground either in reason or revelation, and which opened the way for the ethical theories of the Mediæval Church, which finally shaped themselves into the doctrine of the 'Opera Supererogationis.'

When we consider the position of Irenæus more closely, we see that the new law is supposed to confer liberty; but it is only in this sense that it demands a larger and fuller obedience. The legal idea is only slightly elevated or spiritualized; or the proposition may be reversed, and it can be asserted that the

[1] *Ad. Her.*, iv. 13; Werner, S. 198.

spiritual idea of the Gospel has been legalized. As has been said, the old law in its essence was not abrogated, only enlarged.[1] When we examine the contents of this new law, we find they are the same as the original primitive law which man possessed before the introduction of the Mosaic law, and its ethical contents are those of the primitive law and of the spiritually interpreted Decalogue. The Jewish law is merely an episode which is intruded into the course of history, and the Gospel is the restoration and extension of the primitive and universal law of mankind. There is a strange confused echo of St. Paul's language here, but how utterly misunderstood when we see the theoretical conclusions involved. If the Gospel marks no radical step in advance in the spiritual progress of mankind, and if the position of Irenæus is correct, then the movement is in a circle back to the earlier religious ideas of the race. That the deep spiritual significance of the Gospel is lost sight of by this identification cannot be denied, and all the modifications and practical concessions are of little real value so long as the essential distinction is not recognized and emphasized. No doubt his inheritance from the preceding generations of Gentile Christians, as well as his anti-Gnostic attitude, led Irenæus into this confusion and lack of clearness; and it may be that this tendency to identify the old and the new, which the prevailing and dominant legal conception of the Gospel indicates, was re-

[1] *Ad. Her.*, iv. 13.

enforced and intensified by the application of the doctrine in which so many of the Church Fathers were finding their defence of truth and their vindication of history. Irenæus was only asserting what seemed to be the unanimous opinion of the great writers of this generation, in contending that the old law as well as the new was given by the λόγος. This view is quite in opposition to St. Paul and also the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews,[1] but helps to show how little influence the writings of the New Testament contributed to form the details of the philosophy of history which was being forged in the hot furnace of heathen and Gnostic controversy.

This practical agreement in all essentials between the old law and the Gospel was undoubtedly also largely assisted by the christianizing of the Old Testament. This process had begun very early in the history of the Church, and while we cannot clearly trace the legalizing of the Gospel to this source, yet it undoubtedly contributed largely to the strengthening of the legal conception, and in the end facilitated the importation of many elements of the Jewish religious life and ceremony into the stream of Christian history. To what extent this was done is quite another question, and would involve a special line of investigation. The moralistic, instead of the specifically religious, character which is given to the Christian life of this age by the concentrated and converging action of all these influences is most

[1] Gal. iii. 18; Heb. ii. 2; Ritschl, *Entstehung Altkat. Kirche*, S. 318.

noticeable to a student of the period. To see how thoroughly the whole life was being systematized on the basis of an ethical conception of the Gospel and the legal administration of the same, it is only necessary to study the Church life of this age and note its most salient features. But the practical ideal which is the real test of the religious sweep and vitality of an age, is not dependent alone upon the conceptions which we have been examining, fundamental as they are.

The living source of the inner life of the Apostle to the Gentiles was set forth and emphasized by his conception of Faith, and here too the widest divergence existed between him and Irenæus, as it was shown to have existed also in the case of Justin and his generation. With St. Paul, as has been already shown, faith was an organic relation of the soul of the believer with God through spiritual identification with Christ. The life of man in all its spiritual energy is taken possession of by Christ, and becomes a living expression in the world of the energy and spiritual beauty of the Redeemer. The union is such that it is dependent, not primarily upon the act of the man, but is the issue of the seeking love of Christ, who wins entrance into the soul by the power and tenderness of His love. With Irenæus, however, faith has none of this mystic beauty, nor is it in its source the guarantee of its own perfection. It is in its essence, viewed subjectively, the self-originating act of the individual. It is the intellectual assent which he gives to certain declarations

or promises which God has publicly made. The most important of these are the promises of rewards and punishments. Those who do good shall receive recompense, and those who do evil shall be punished. Faith is thus confounded with obedience, and a moral turn is given to the religious life which strips it of the essentially spiritual character with which it was endowed, as St. Paul saw it in the union of the life with Christ.[1] It may be that in this moral interpretation which the Christians of this age gave the Gospel we are to recognize the intensely practical interest which men saw in religion, and their inability to see any reason in its existence unless it contributed immediately and directly to life itself. But, on the other hand, we must recognize the fact that St. Paul, too, felt its enormous value for life as the practical justification of his preaching and the real significance of the revelation of Christ. But he saw this moral or practical life flowing down from Christ, the centre and source of his spiritual living; and he regarded his life on this side as the natural expression of the hidden divine life of the Son of God in the soul. With Irenæus, on the other hand, the practical life seems to have its source, at least according to the form in which he expresses it, in the man himself, and the impulse is furnished by the certainty that each individual act is to be rewarded or punished by God in accordance with its nature. Such a morality as this is external and superficial, and will in time wear thin. It has no living source outside the life of

[1] *Ad. Her.*, iv. 6, 5.

the soul which is self-centred and self-nourished. There is an element of confusion here which cannot be escaped. If a man can do good independently of God, there is neither room for nor need of salvation. Each man is ultimately his own salvation. If he does good he is saved. If he does evil he is punished, and all that God can do is to furnish light and guidance. The shallow misconception of sin haunts and weakens the idea of faith. What man, as a sinner, really needs is not the peace of the soul with God, but a 'Donum Superadditum' which takes away the burden and oppression of the past, permitting him to realize the freedom of his manhood. As has been well said, "The consciousness of sin does not express itself in the cry of the soul for peace with God through union with Christ, but in the moan for a lost Paradise." This lack of spiritual depth and insight cannot be ignored in an estimate of this period. In this connection it has been suggested that it is a matter of note that Irenæus nowhere speaks of prayer, while it is the burden of all St. Paul's writings. It is not to be supposed, nor is it even to be suggested, that this great Father in his own inner life did not feel the full measure and weight of the new intercourse of the soul with God which was opened through prayer, for his own life is the clearest proof to the contrary. But the firm necessity for an inner and religious basis for the Christian life does not seem to have impressed itself upon him, or been realized by him as by the Apostle Paul.

In another aspect of faith which is presented to us in his writings, we see that the inner or personal and subjective character of faith, as a communion of the soul with God and a union with Christ as the very heart and root of this word, is not recognized by him The unique interpretation which is the note of the Apostle's Christian definition of faith is out of his view. It is with him by far too much an intellectual matter. This intellectual form, which was the ultimate expression of this Christian truth, was becoming consolidated in this period, and it took such deep hold upon the Christian Church, that it has never been possible to entirely restore the word to its purest and most perfect expression as found in the teachings of St. Paul. The intellectual element in the Christian consciousness only has its perfect expression when it stands in its proper relations. With Irenæus faith in God is only a knowledge of God and the doing of His will. The religious phenomena which St. Paul finds in the new Christian interpretation of the word are wholly set aside, and the word is understood intellectually and morally. By so doing, the essential religious significance of the word is destroyed, and it sinks at once to the level of the commonplace and conventional use which has made it the puzzle and confusion of unbelievers, who cannot see any organic relation between it as so understood and the life of the soul. At the root of this misconception lies the old antique misinterpretation of life, and the profound error from which alone only a clear apprehension of the

Gospel of Christ could release men—that is, that virtue can be taught, that an intellectual knowledge of the truth and the good are sufficient, and will in time become the motive for their appropriation and doing. Because the Gospel was so interpreted, because it struggled along for years and centuries with the burden of this misreading upon it, therefore it has seemed to many as if it was of its essence, and the fiercest controversies have sprung up about a matter which has no organic relation with the thought of the most reflective and lofty mind of the Apostolic Age.

But, assigning to this meaning of faith the greatest fulness possible, we do not pass within the sphere of the deep spirituality of St. Paul; nor does this faith, which is knowledge, rise to the mystical sense which haunted the minds of the Neoplatonists, although its roots lay in the same region of the spirit from which this, the last expression of the Hellenic mind, issued. This faith which is knowledge, or holding as true, is of the simplest and almost a superficial kind: it is that God is the Creator of the world and Father of men, and that what He has taught us in Jesus Christ He will surely do. He has set forth this new law in Jesus Christ, and if one fulfils the demands of this law, this is evidence of one's faith.[1] In this trust in the divine promises faith finds its fullest expression.[2] This knowledge of the good becomes in turn the motive for doing it.[3]

[1] *Ad. Her.*, iv. 6, 5.

[2] *Ibid.*, iv. 21, 1.

[3] *Ibid.*, v. 12, 4; iv. 39, 2.

This intellectual optimism has not been vindicated by the centuries which have since passed away. This faith is a far colder and feebler force than that upon which the Apostle's life rested, and rose out of those superficial apprehensions which the mind, and the mind alone, is capable of grasping. This was, in part perhaps, a consequence of the prevailing intellectualism of the Greek mind. For this mind, in a way and to an extent never surpassed in the history of man, sought out the path of life by pure speculation and investigation, and was for ever analyzing and defining the results of its own search. It was perhaps also inevitable that these same processes should be applied, and too exclusively applied, to the Gospel. But the profound mistake was to forget that a personal relation is not a subject which can be exhausted by definition, nor can its character be expressed in purely intellectual terms. The peculiar difficulties of the Church, and the characteristic features of the spiritual life of the world in that day, undoubtedly ministered to this movement. The Church, having taken its place in the world, became a part of its history, and subject to the grand currents which were working within the great movement of life represented by the ancient civilization. The gradual deterioration of spiritual vigour, and the growing tendency to a more complete secularizing of the Church, made it easier to assert and retain certain intellectual propositions which could become the standard and rallying-point for Christians, than it was to retain the high level of spiritual life and

the simple and living personal devotion to Jesus Christ, which was the characteristic feature of the Apostolic Age. On the other hand, the long battle with the Gnostics had, together with the natural tendencies of the age and the intellectual activity of the Greek mind, brought the subject of definition sharply into view. If the Gospel was the 'Nova Lex,' not only the practice, but the principles which are involved in the Gospel, should be clearly expressed. It was an easy transition in the use of words to give to these formulas the title of 'the Faith.' When the subjective state had for the great mass changed its character, and its earlier form, to some extent at least, disappeared, it produced no violent change in the current of the Church life when the intellectual affirmations of the mind were substituted for the state of the soul itself and called faith. It is quite another and an impossible thing to give a definition of the soul's relations to Christ which can be accepted as an adequate expression of this higher Christian consciousness. But the objective and dogmatic definition of faith was firmly established in this age, at least in some localities; and we have in Irenæus a full statement of what were the essentials of the faith as held by the Universal Church.

There is no disposition on the part of the present writer to minimize the value of the Creeds of the Christian Church. They may be, and often are, a bulwark against the intellectual novelties which are offered as a substitute for the historical facts affirmed

by these Creeds; but, on the other hand, they have been made by some a substitute for, or a check upon, the spiritual ardour and passion of the Christian soul. No period of history furnishes a clearer illustration of the effect which the change in the conception of faith wrought than this period. The Regula Fidei became the supreme test of a man's Christianity. A dreary age of theological controversy, with all its wearisome and painful circumstances, followed fast upon the effort to give intellectual expression to the most vital element of the Gospel. This effort was thrust upon the Church by the necessities of the case, but, on the other hand, the prevailing spirit within the Church was in entire sympathy with this intellectual tendency. The Person of Christ was vindicated, but the spirit and character seemed often of but little moment.

It was inevitable that from this point of view orthodoxy should in the end supersede, in the minds of most, the claims of character, and life and a confession of faith become the final test and measure of a man's discipleship to Christ, not a spiritual life or the personal relation of the soul to God in Christ. The vast current of Christian history was slowly and silently deflected from the deep channel of the original stream, and the future stands before us in the new forces which are making themselves felt. The danger which has again and again threatened the Gospel, that it should be secularized and reduced to the mere outward life of an organization, and that

the spiritual life in Christ should be lost in theology, and religion become a mere intellectualism on the one hand or a morality on the other, is now breaking into view.

The supreme antinomianism of St. Paul has been succeeded by a legalism of a more or less spiritualized form, but essentially legal in its essence. The great organism which, in accordance with the historic laws of its environment, had been slowly developing and strengthening itself, rose to such supreme importance in the eyes of men, that the individual life was to a large degree overlooked or deliberately neglected. For one of the striking differences between the ancient and modern civilization is to be found in the estimate of the individual life in relation to the larger organism of society and the institutions in which the social life expresses itself. In the Ancient World the State came first, and society at large was the unit, the individual being but a mere portion or element of the greater life for which he was created. Christianity contained in it a denial of the absolute omnipotence of the State and an assertion of the value of the individual soul, which could not, however, find its full and complete expression amid the hostile forces of the Ancient World. In modern society, however, the order of thought has been reversed, and the lost emphasis has been gradually restored. Society, institutions, and all the distinctive expressions of organized and civilized life have their ground and justification in their ability to minister to and develop the life of the individual members of society. Their

value and sacredness lie not in any abstract essence or theory of their origin, but in the power which they possess of enlarging the character and personality of the individual. In the Roman World the individual existed for the sake of the State; in the Modern World the State for the sake of the individual. In the ecclesiastical theory of the Christian Church we have the old Roman idea of the State transferred to the Christian territory, and it still survives, and is likely to survive, until the full measure of the Christian idea has been realized. The contrast between ancient society and modern society lies more largely in this difference of point of view than we fully appreciate, and it is the reversal of the old order which has given such a richer, fuller, and more diversified development of the life of the man of the present in contrast with the single virtues and less expansive forces of character in the ancient civilization. Thus this age was seeing the gradual transference of the dominant ideas of society into the organization and thought of the Church, and the individual life became of less and less significance, while the great organization of the Church claimed for itself the place of importance in the spiritual life of man as the State rose supreme and alone above the struggle of individual aspirations which were hardly as yet more than suspected, and the larger field of the future was certainly not even a dream to the most reflective.

The early primitive brotherhood of Christians had disappeared. In this early brotherhood the personal

character of the believer and his union with Christ were the common ties which united the different members and societies together. This union with Christ, of course, still existed, but it was not the special note of the new history. In the new Catholic Church the holiness of the individual is only an ideal to be striven after and not to be hoped for except under certain conditions which the vast majority could not possibly attain, for it was a moral ideal and not a spiritual relation which was sought. But the organism into which men were brought was holy, inasmuch as the Church was asserted to be the divine kingdom on earth endowed with certain spiritual powers. As a divine organism it was constantly manifesting and dispensing these powers through its Sacramental Institutions and various means of Grace. Through the power of the Church miracles are wrought, and it is the institution, through its divinely authorized representatives, which offers pure and holy sacrifices unto God. The predicates of purity and holiness, which were once the characteristics and requisites of the individual Christian, are now transferred to the institution which has its external organization and representatives.[1]

As a consequence of these profound changes, and the radical difference in the conditions and atmosphere in which the soul found itself, there was necessarily also a wide difference in the way in

[1] *Ad. Her.*, ii. 3, 4, 5; *Ibid.*, iii. 4, iv. 18, 4; R. A. Lipsius, *Die Zeitd. Iren. v. Lyon u. d. Entsteh. d. Altkatol. Kirche*; Von Sybel, *Historische Zeitschrift*, B. xxviii., 1872.

which the Christian spirit interpreted that other element of the practical ideal of the Christian life—that is, the new divine sonship into which fellowship with Christ had brought the soul, which was the ultimate outcome and highest manifestation of the Gospel.

The sonship of man to God or in God is, as we know, the highest conception which St. Paul had of the full fruit of redemption. This filial relation is established in, and guaranteed by, the forgiveness of sins on the part of God, and the reception and participation of man in the divine disposition through faith in Christ. The filial relation is the essential thing, and involves all the greatest blessings which are included in redemption. Beyond this present fact there is nothing higher. The full expansion of it is a matter of experience, but its essence is now and here in this new consciousness of sonship with its spiritual freedom and its spiritual delight. With Irenæus, however, a different mode of regarding this sonship is apparent, and one which in a great degree changes its entire character. The organic relation which exists between forgiveness and sonship through faith in Christ, which is the profound thought of St. Paul, has a time or logical character given it by Irenæus, and sonship is regarded as the sequence of which forgiveness is the antecedent. Moreover, sonship is linked with immortality as its condition and expression. It is not the filial relation which is the thing emphasized, but an existence like God's—a kind of Godlike immortality. Hence, from

the standpoint of Irenæus, there were stages in salvation and a progress which was dependent upon man's works. From this resulted an uncertainty of the future, which left the reality of Christ's salvation a matter of doubt for the individual soul. The spiritual union of the soul with Christ, which is of the essence of the Pauline faith, is practically denied ; and the spiritual intercourse of the child with the Father, which is the very heart of the Christian sonship, is changed or ignored, and sonship means a kind of new creation which, although it seems to preserve the language of the Apostle, really means something different. It means a kind of supernatural recreation after the measure of the divine existence. The phrase which was so often on the lips of the Fathers, that the Son of God became man in order that man might become a son of God, had its origin in the doctrine of the Incarnation as they interpreted it, and not in the spiritual experience of the soul through the forgiveness of sins set forth in Christ. More than that, this conception of sonship had its roots in a metaphysical or substantial view of the divine nature and its relation to man and his redemption on this side of his being, not in the moral and spiritual side—that is, not in the love and righteousness of God as the only possible ground of our sonship in Him. The whole idea of sonship has this metaphysical rather than the spiritual point of view behind it. The process of transformation by which man becomes a son of God seems to concern itself too much with the mere matter of existence and

the immortality of those functions by which our personality seems preserved, or, at least, is involved. Even if we admit the most spiritualized interpretation possible, the change implied is in the substance of human nature or the fundamental being of man, rather than in the heart and soul and the spiritual elements of man. In this idea of a semi-divine life in the future as the real meaning and essence of sonship, we see traces of the ancient Hellenic spirit, and the tone of the spiritual mood of the age in which the writer lived. But this, however true in itself, is not the idea of St. Paul, and the way in which the Gospel idea of sonship has been reinterpreted shows clearly how profoundly the spirit of the ancient civilization had penetrated into the interpretation of those truths which lie at the very heart of the Gospel. That this is by no means a forced or far-fetched reading of the past age with which we are engaged, is clear from the light which is thrown out by the practical interpretation of the idea which lay beneath. The position of good works as an element in the attainment of salvation was such that sonship, as the full realization of this truth, must inevitably be relegated to the future. If sonship is not an immediate possession but a future contingency dependent upon certain definite moral acts, then, to all intents and purposes, salvation itself is so largely conditioned by man that it may be said to have its origin in him, and the certitude which is the heart of the Apostle's joy is left to an indefinite and unknown future. Salvation itself as a present

fact loses its high meaning. Whatever it now is, it must be regarded but as an opportunity to assure the future and larger salvation, the perfect salvation of the immortality of the future. The element of certitude which is to be found in the sonship to God as a result or necessary expression of the faith in Christ, which is set forth with such passionate emphasis by St. Paul, is now relegated to the future, and guarded by restrictions which are unspiritual and external. Ecclesiastical authority now supersedes this inner conviction, and must guarantee the salvation of the individual soul. It is perfectly evident that we are now far away from the atmosphere of the Apostolic Age and the standpoint of the great Apostle. It is beside the point to say that there was a noble and simple Christian life untouched by theories and living deep in the secret fellowship of Christ in that age. It is perfectly true, and it is the one thing for which we may be profoundly grateful, that this has been the case, to a greater or less degree, in every age of the Christian Church. Irenæus himself was of a warm religious nature, bent upon doing the will of God. Devoid of that real profundity which marks the great religious genius, he was perhaps so much the better adapted to set forth the best side of the Church of his age. And in him we see one of the best types of the Catholic Christianity which was to be the ruling force through so many centuries of history. Setting forth also the true value of the Catholic Church to this age as lying, not in the lofty idealism of its dreams or the

passionate reaffirmation of the Apostolic aims, but in a severe and practical morality which is one of the perpetual needs of the human race.

And yet the fact remains that it is not by individual lives that an age or an institution must be measured, but by the ideals which are held up before the world, by the clearness with which they are grasped, and by the aggregate life which issues from that age or institution which represents to posterity the force of the tendencies and ideals which then prevailed. It is the type of character which is cultivated, the modes of thought which are the most powerful, and the paths which are sought out by men which are the true standards of judgment. The Christianity of the age of Irenæus was not aiming at the same ideal of personal life, or seeking it by the same direct paths in which the Apostle walked. Each age must struggle on in the path before it, and its failures or successes are for us to study, not to imitate. The life this age of Irenæus sought was a Christian life, but it did not give the same interpretation to the central facts which St. Paul had given. Whether this life is larger and more satisfying is a matter which each individual must decide for himself, but this very decision will itself be determined by certain *a priori* considerations, one of which, at least, will be: When all is said, which is the higher, finer conception, that of St. Paul or that of Irenæus? which is the supremest authority in the field of the Christian life, the Apostle to the Gentiles or the Ancient Catholic Church of the second century?

CHAPTER IV

THE ALEXANDRINES, CLEMENT, AND ORIGEN

PLUTARCH tells us that when Alexander was about to set out on his expedition against the Persians he had many signs from the Divine Powers: among others that a statue of Orpheus was in a profuse sweat for several days. This, he says, was understood to signify that Alexander would perform actions so worthy to be celebrated that they would cost the poets and musicians much labour and sweat.

The momentous issues involved in this wonderful expedition not even the keen eye of his great teacher Aristotle could seize, and the mighty genius and vast renown of this, his greatest pupil, has indeed kept the world wondering ever since. The two results of his career, which, in addition to their enormous importance in relation to the world's history, bear most directly upon Christian history, are the Hellenizing of the East and the Founding of Alexandria. The destruction of the Jewish state, which was one of the most important events of the Alexandrian conquest, broke down the isolation which

had surrounded the Jewish race; and then began the great movement of the Jewish people, which has continued through centuries and reached to the farthest limits of civilization. After the founding of Alexandria it was the one city where the Jews crowded in greatest numbers, and the rapid growth in population and wealth of this city, and the centuries through which it has endured, are striking evidences of the genius of its great founder. Situated almost on the dividing line between three continents, it became the centre of all the most powerful and characteristic intellectual elements in each.

The East and the West met here under entirely new conditions. The Alexandrian Jew here came in contact with Greek culture in its most attractive and sympathetic forms. Here, too, the keen subtle intellect of the Greek was touched with the passion and mystery of the East, with its spiritual longing and its spiritual pathos.

The relatively sudden growth of the city tends to make one lose sight of the significance of the various elements which combined to form its unique and most impressive life. But the true value of its history is found in the special conditions which enabled it to become one of the prevailing forces of the future, and made it the representative of certain tendencies which never have been manifested with the same energy and the same originality in any other city, ancient or modern. The consolidation of the civilized world under the Empire had broken down, or at least largely reduced, the animosities and

antagonisms of the various races under its rule, thus opening the way for a free interchange of ideas, and allowing the currents of thought to spread more widely. Alexandria in many respects may be called the representative city of the Empire. Here the most venerable and the most brilliant civilizations of the past mingled in one glittering and imposing life, and found the highest expression of its intellectual aspirations in the most perfect literature the world has ever seen. Mankind lost something, which has never been replaced, in the decay of that ancient and splendid civilization.

In Alexandria during the second and third centuries of the Christian era the intellectual history of the Empire found its centre and its fullest expression. Not only was the busiest mercantile life of the age found here, but here was also the most splendid library the world had ever known. Here the schools were the broadest, and their activity the greatest. The University of Alexandria was the most progressive and enthusiastic one in the Empire, while Athens represented the conservative and, in many respects, the reactionary elements of the ancient culture. Here, amid the heat and ferment of this new life, new forces were generated and new paths opened for the human mind.

Alexandria was at the same time the wealthiest, wittiest, most vivacious, and material of all the cities of the Empire. Its scurrilous wit was proverbial, and its materialism also. One of the most acute observers of its life says of Egyptian society that

it worshipped but one God—Gain. And yet this city, so Greek in its tastes and habits, so cosmopolitan in its sympathies, felt the touch of the past upon it, and the brooding spirit of the Nile filled the soul with the depth and mystery of human life, and under that blazing southern sky the profound darkness, amid which the soul of the Oriental felt itself struggling, haunted the minds of all, giving a bitterness to the wildest jests, taking the joy out of the most passionate delight, veiling the grinning skull at the richest feasts, and brooding like a hidden and mysterious anguish over the minds of all.

In this atmosphere, so strange, so remote, so brilliant, so sad, combining all the beautiful, grotesque, conflicting, appealing, and inspiring elements of that wonderful past, developed ideas, moods, hopes, theories, and systems which represent a new stage in the history of the human soul, and mark a real advance in spiritual culture. Here the various religions of the East, the spiritual aspirations of the Oriental World, met the clear, clean-cut, yet subtle speculations of the most fearless intellects the world has ever known. As a result of this contact, and in particular by the mutual action and reaction of the two most vital forces of the past, Judaism and Hellenism, sprang forth that fusion or reconciliation of the two, that religious philosophy which we call Alexandrianism, and whose first exponent and perhaps most perfect representative was Philo the Jew.

The influence of this writer upon the subsequent

course of thought in Alexandria was not the supremacy of a powerful mind winning adherents to a clearly articulated system by the sheer force and weight it possessed, but rather of one who most fully represents the transition by which the human mind was passing into a new intellectual and spiritual atmosphere, and entering upon or creating new modes of thought, and enlarging on all sides the horizon of man's spirit.

Yet this new mode of thought, so inseparably associated with Alexandria and Philo, had its antecedent causes, as is the case in every great movement, and the springs which fed the new stream lay far back in the past. When we approach this movement from the side of the Jewish element in it, it is easy to see how cultivated men of that race would feel at once the breath of a new life and the air of a new history blowing about them when they had entered the busy and restless life of Alexandria. For a greater contrast than that between the ancient and solitary city of Jerusalem with its narrow religious traditions and hard dogmatic atmosphere, and the new and splendid city of the Ptolemies with the infinite sea before it and Egypt for its background, can hardly be imagined. The whole literary activity of the Jews of Alexandria shows how powerfully these new conditions and new influences affected them, and the books in the extant sacred literature of the Jew which are generally assigned to Alexandria bear most unmistakable signs of the new contact. The effect is also manifest in the revision which

was made of the older literature. The harsh simplicity and archaic anthropomorphism of the earlier books were distinctly modified, and as the Jew became more and more a citizen of Alexandria, and less and less a citizen of Jerusalem, he consciously or unconsciously changed his point of view and re-read his ancient books in the light of the flood of new ideas which poured in on him from every side. The wide sea of Greek speculation seized him and bore him far away from the crude and simple ideas, as they seemed, of the ancient life of his race. Yet the passion of his race would not allow him to forget the history which was to him far more glorious than that of Greece or Rome, and gave a solemnity to life which the gigantic achievements of Egypt and Babylon could not bestow. He read into the old language of his Hebrew Scriptures—so simple, so direct, so solemn—new meanings, and tried to reconcile it with the vast intellectual life whose currents seemed bearing him on into a future of thought never contemplated or even suggested by any of his ancient books.

The Jew in Alexandria met something more than the lifeless traditions of Hellenic culture and the empty boasts of a literary school. He came in contact with a living force, and that force was the ancient Greek spirit which had revived again, and once more was struggling with the old problems in a different mood and with less of hope than in the past, but with an intensity and passion which gave it new value and a new power. The beginnings

of the revival of Hellenism in the first century in Alexandria were marked by those literary efforts which always seem to precede any great movement in the intellectual life of the world. The old writings are re-read, the old passages studied anew, comment and criticism pour their darkness or illumination over the old pages, opposing schools of interpretation spring up and wrangle over the real meaning of the old ideas, and the old teachers are clothed again in their ancient authority, and it seems at last as if man's salvation lay in the past, and his real life only the dream of the glories which have faded away for ever. So it was at Alexandria. The followers of Plato and Aristotle quarrelled and fought over the supremacy of their teachers, and the struggle seemed about to end in the death of the ancient Greek spirit. This intense mental and spiritual activity, and the various results which issued from it, became not only the common property of all scholars, but stimulated various tendencies which led to an attempt, not merely to reproduce the old, but to gather into one large and universal system all the heritage of the past, both Hebrew and Greek. Philo was the representative of this new movement, and although it cannot be said, strictly speaking, that he was the founder of a system, he yet tried to include so much in his range of vision, that the suggestiveness of his efforts and the deep seriousness of his temper gave him an influence which was most stimulating to the future. Two of the most important elements in the new movement represented by Philo are the

Jewish faith in revelation which is of the very essence of Judaism, and the Greek freedom of speculation by which the ancient revelation of the Hebrew was reinterpreted through the medium of the prevailing theory of Allegorism which was characteristic both of the Hebrew and Greek scholars of this age. The new factor of Revelation, which was imported into the general stream of Alexandrian life through the influence of the Jew, found a ready reception on the part of the Greek, because, as a result of past experience, his mind was prepared for a new and radical departure from the previous philosophical methods of his race. The sceptical despair, which resulted from the failure to achieve a full knowledge of divine things through the exercise of the pure reason, led the mind of the age to seek for satisfaction through other than purely scientific channels. That intense desire, which is never absent from the most serious and vivid life of men, to 'leap beyond the flaming ramparts of the world,' exercised in this age an influence which made it one of the chief forces in human life. Any ladder by which the soul could scale the unseen heights was grasped with eager hands, and the old systems of philosophy, especially those which had a religious colouring, as well as the traditional religious systems, began again under new interpretations to renew their former influence.[1] But the objective methods of the past had in reality long since exhausted themselves. Knowledge by

[1] Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen*, Dritter Theil, Zweite Abtheilung, S. 70.

that path had ended in an universal scepticism and bankruptcy. The human spirit was now forced to turn inward upon itself, and the knowledge of its own weakness and poverty weighed heavily upon it. A deeper self-consciousness was the result of this new introversion. The moral and spiritual imperfections of mankind stood out in glaring and hideous distinctness. The emptiness of earthly life with its intense and unsatisfied desires, the wide and apparently hopeless chasm which lay between man and God, destroyed for ever the buoyant spirit and the free exulting hope of the past. A new tone ran through human thought, and a new hue spread itself over human life—a tone of passion and anguish, a hue sombre and melancholy. Great spiritual needs revealed themselves, and the worthlessness of all previous attainments seemed to add to man's poverty.

The revival of Paganism, which began in this century, filled men's minds with more vivid religious emotions, and superstition grew rank in this hot and fertile soil. The spiritual atmosphere of Alexandria was saturated with faith in revelations and miracles, and the Greek thinker who was stirred to speculation by the new religious interest in the air found the way prepared for him, not only by the influence of the Hebrew element in the intellectual life around him, but also through the working of his own history and the expansion and development of certain tendencies which were not only characteristic of this age, but which were also inherent, we may

say, in the line of philosophical development. The new religious element or motive which entered into speculation in Alexandria as at no other place, stamps the movement with an originality and significance not to be over-estimated. Like the river whose life-giving currents supplied all the wealth of this splendid city, and which, before it lost itself in the great sea towards which it had been so long journeying, divided itself into many yet practically parallel streams, so the great current of intellectual life in Alexandria divided itself into two main streams before it lost itself in the general life of the world and made its great contribution to the general history of the human spirit. These two streams were the Jewish-Grecian philosophy or religio-philosophy of Philo which influenced so profoundly the Greek thinkers as well as the Christian theologians, and the purely Greek current which, although it was affected by the influence of Philonic speculation, yet included in it mainly those elements which came from the Neopythagoreans, the Platonists, and the later Stoics, and which culminated finally in Neoplatonism. Some, however, have classed the characteristic Christian expression of thought in Alexandria as an independent movement, and divide the peculiar product of the intellectual forces here at work into three instead of two distinct streams—the Christian, the Gnostic, and the Neoplatonic—yet recognizing in all these many common elements. Gnosticism, it has been said, "was the new birth of the old Oriental thought, Neoplatonism of the

ancient Occidental thought, and Christianity was between and above them both."[1] It can fairly be disputed, however, whether Gnosticism can be called an original movement, and not rather an eclecticism which expressed the agitation caused by the strength and volume of the great currents which were sweeping through the history. Here and there, by the little eddies in the great stream, little groups gathered about some one idea, and the endless combinations and arrangements which the wealth of the material permitted produced those various schools, all classified under the one generic name of Gnosticism, which have been the puzzle and despair of the student. Yet their very number is the clearest witness to the powerful forces which were swaying the minds of men towards new thoughts, and inspiring new emotions which give a reality and intensity to the life of Alexandria, which all the ignorance and confusion in which we are now left cannot wholly obscure. In the speculations of Philo there lay the seeds of many new systems, and the subsequent speculations of the various schools of Alexandria were so closely related to each other and the ideas which he had suggested, that it has been asserted by so great a critic as Baur that the resemblance running through them is so pronounced that they appear to be but an expansion of the original and characteristic form of thought which found expression in his writings.[2]

[1] Zeller, *Phil. d. Griechen*, T. ii. Ab. ii. S. 200.

[2] "Aus den Schriften der Neoplatoniker, so wie aus den

Our knowledge, however, of the life of Alexandria through the first and second centuries is so fragmentary, that the exact relation of the various schools cannot be arbitrarily determined. As the religious expression of this great agitation finds its clearest exponents in the writings of the great Church Fathers of Alexandria, so we may say that the philosophical culmination of this new movement was represented by Neoplatonism. And yet such a division would apparently ignore the influence or reaction which each exerted on the other. Neoplatonism as a system cannot be said to have had a thoroughly defined system before Plotinus in the third century, yet the elements out of which it grew were clearly apparent long before. Although its descent from Philo seems to be so strongly affirmed by many critics, yet the various ideas which give it such singular and striking originality can, in many instances at least, be seen to have descended to it through its classical antecedents, which contained many clearly defined tendencies which led to the same mental attitude, and predisposed to the same conclusions, as those suggested by the Philonic thought. Philo started from the firm insistence of what seemed to him as a Jew a necessary assumption

Schriften Philo's, lasst sich ein ganz gleiches System von Dogmen construiren, wie aus den Schriften der Kirchenväter, und das Philonische System ins besondere steht zu dem System der Christlichen Theologie der ersten Jahrhunderte in einen so engen Verwandtschaftverhältniss, dass man beinahe versucht sein könnte, das letztere nur für eine Fortbildung und Erweiterung des erstern zu halten."—Baur, *Vorlesungen ü. d. Dogmeng.*, B. i. S. 90.

—a principle of Revelation antecedent to all speculation. This Revelation of the Divine was mediated through Powers or Principles, the Logoi of the Stoic philosophy, and which he most probably derived immediately from the Stoics. This position of Philo was also the underlying assumption of Neoplatonism which it inherited not only from Philo, but also as a movement in Greek thought from its Stoic, Platonic, and Neopythagorean predecessors. The results of the earlier philosophical speculations of the Greeks had led to a wide separation, in many of the schools at least, between man and God. The theory of the few had in turn become the mood of the many. To most thoughtful men an awful and impassible chasm seemed to separate them from God, and there were no means at hand by which the space could be bridged. However heavy the problem weighed upon them, there seemed but two ways open for its solution, and neither of these seemed possible. Either God must cross the gulf and find man in his helplessness, or He must show man some means by which he could reach God. To the Pagan philosopher with his view of the Divine Nature the first was absurd. It demanded too much. No grounds could be found anywhere to justify such an expectation. Moreover, it was not possible for God to come in such immediate contact with matter, that He could rescue man from the misery and hopelessness which were the necessary and inevitable result of this earthly life. On the other hand, how could man rise to God, and what

mediating agencies were at hand by which this access to the Divine Life might be attained or, at least, assisted? The old religions which had been so long discredited, and which had now renewed their influence under the sway of the great religious revival in Paganism which marks this period, were to furnish the desired means for a realization of the philosophical attempt to guarantee and justify faith in the Divine. The existing religious traditions were spiritualized by means of the Allegorical system, and so sublimated that they lost all their grossness. Thus regarded, their existence was vindicated and the popular faiths justified, and even from the philosopher's standpoint these religions were the necessary and indispensable means by which alone the mass of men could have any conception of God or rise to a higher life. These religions were adopted as instruments in spiritual progress, and thus adopted and incorporated in the philosophical systems, we find religion and philosophy united, and the philosopher becomes the true prophet and servant of God. It is true the mediating agencies of the Divine Activity which were part of the Stoic philosophy had in their origin no relation with the popular religions, but the mystical tendencies of the Neopythagoreans made themselves felt, and gave a religious and traditional interpretation to ideas which were in many ways closely related to Stoicism. Philosophical conceptions were identified with divine beings, and natural forces were transformed into the spiritual agencies of the popular religion.

When we find a man like Plutarch, without the severity and clearness of the true philosopher, yet with large culture and wide human sympathies, seeing in the doctrine of Demons a clearer explanation of the real problem of life and an advance upon the theory of matter suggested by Plato for the solution of the enigma, we are prepared for a great change in the course of human thought. This attitude of Plutarch shows the revival of religious interest and the renewal of the ancient sway of Polytheism. The Neoplatonic speculation, which was the outcome of this revival of religious interest and intellectual activity, was marked not only by the enlistment of philosophy in the cause of religion, but a fusion of the two. In this respect, at least as the union of the two primary forces of human life, Religion and Philosophy, we have a striking parallel to the later Christian development of Mediæval Scholasticism.[1] Looked at from the point of view of the earlier systems, Neoplatonism indicates the decadence of the scientific spirit which marks the classic schools of antiquity. And this, not only on account of the fact that it had a religious note which was often, if not always, absent from them, and a religious purpose, but because it was also a fusion of many elements; and however original might be the development, as in Plotinus, yet the ideas themselves were not original, nor were they regarded as pure intellectual conceptions or intuitions, but were touched with sentiment and feeling, and had their

[1] Zeller, *Phil. d. Griechen*, T. ii. Ab. ii. S. 430.

origin in mysticism rather than the pure act of the reason. It has been much disputed whether this new element in philosophic speculation, which is so manifest in Philo and his spiritual heirs, particularly the Neoplatonists, is of Oriental or Greek origin.[1] Mysticism has always been the prevailing note of all Oriental speculation, and it is but a natural inference to conclude, from the growing influence of the East upon the course of Western life and thought, that this is one of the signs of its intrusion. But, on the other hand, there is not wanting evidence which shows an increase in the mystical tendencies within the circle of Greek thought which was in no way due to the encroachments of the East. The prevailing scepticism, which was the outcome of the earlier speculations, and which had brought man to such a state of intellectual despair, produced a reaction. This reaction stamped itself upon every effort which characterized the renewal of the struggle for a solid and satisfactory foundation for human life. As scepticism was the end of all the previous speculation, so mysticism, which is the reaction from it, became the root of the new spiritual history. We need therefore not of necessity look beyond the movement of thought which was unfolding itself within the realm of the Greek mind for the origin of the most striking features of the new philosophy.

The underlying principles of Neoplatonism, which were gradually developed into clearness and expressed in the most logical and philosophical of its

[1] C. H. Kirchner, *Die Philosophie des Plotin*, S. 11.

teachers, were in existence and operative long antecedent to their systematic expression. The moment we examine them and see how characteristic and how fundamental they were, we feel that this must be true, although the material for confirming the judgment may be, as it is, very scanty.

The Neoplatonic doctrine of God was the scientific foundation and objective principle upon which the system was reared. Over against this, and springing not from the cold intellectual life of the man, but from his deepest soul, came a passionate desire after perfection and spiritual union with Divinity in a world above the finite and limited, and even above consciousness itself. This mystic passion, which from one point of view seems the most distinctive note of Neoplatonism, was the subjective principle of the system, and the one which allied it to the wide and hungry spiritual life of man. The development of the objective principle, the doctrine of God, is of exceptional interest, not only because it was so profoundly influential over Christian thought in the same field, but because the same course has been run again and again in the long sweep of the centuries.

By the pure processes of reason and logic the philosophic mind had attained to a conception of God free from all qualities: pure abstract Being, absolute, unknown, and unknowable. This fundamental Unity, the original essence from which all is derived, the primary Being, which is neither reason nor an object of rational cognition, since it

is separated from all the approaches of the mind of man because it is the Unknowable, and exalted above the finite and limited, left the mind of man staring into the hopeless blank of a bottomless abyss, from which no knowledge or light could be attained by any of the intellectual theories which Greek thought had made familiar. From this dreary speculative Agnosticism man could not derive any help so long as he clung to the old classic axiom of philosophy that man can reach the goal of his deepest cravings, God, only by means of pure thought. Yet the traditions of philosophy were so firmly established, the conviction of the Divine Transcendence was so deeply rooted in the mind, that to the thinker trained in the methods of the Greek schools there seems to be no tendency or disposition to question the definition which the long struggle had brought forth.

Yet, in saying this, it must not be forgotten that Neoplatonism had attempted to gain an universal view of life, and embody in one comprehensive system all the ideas of previously existing philosophical theories. Over against the transcendental Monotheism which it inherited from its Platonic predecessors, was laid the Stoical doctrine of the Divine Nature which was purely Pantheistic. This philosophical motive or principle appealed to the practical tendencies of the Neoplatonic teachers, and found its justification in the effort to discover a firm ground for the existing Polytheism. Through the incorporation of the Stoical element into the

system, room was made for the existing worships of the various gods. Thus, it may be said that at times Neoplatonism seemed to hover or oscillate between Theism or Pantheism, as the Stoic or Platonic point of view predominated. When theoretical considerations prevailed, and speculative consistency was demanded, it appeared as purely Monotheistic; but when practical demands and popular tendencies were supreme, it became grossly Polytheistic.[1] The syncretistic nature of Neoplatonism is the explanation of this apparent conflict of fundamental principles, and it is the theoretical inconsistencies which gave it the prevailing influence, and made it the great intellectual phenomenon of the last struggle of the classic spirit. For the great passion of the age was the Infinite God. The soul of the world was seeking Him and would not be refused, and the primary conception of His moral perfection, which led to the theoretical separation of Him from all contact with the world, also saved man from the practical results of the speculative elements of Pantheism, which were the heritage from the past rather than the organic evolution of the ideas from which the Neoplatonic thinkers started.

In a way, and to an extent entirely unknown to the Modern World, the chain of the senses bound the spirit of the Greek, and lay so heavily upon the souls of the men of the past, that escape from it constituted, to them at least, the great object of

[1] Tschirner, *Der Fall des Heidenthum*, B. ii. S. 426.

existence. Unless we can realize this in a measure at least, we are not able to calculate the force which the subjective or mystical element in Neoplatonism exerted. Amid the brilliant pageant of the world, and under the stress of the stormy passions which swept over the soul, the moaning spirit sought peace and silence in the eternal calm of that Life so far away from and above the troubled ocean of man's brief existence. In the mystic twilight of their speculations, and out of their own inward struggles, rose the vision of another way than the path of abstract thought by which the soul may find God. A new element was thus introduced into the solution of the problem—a new spiritual function which was to solve the hitherto insoluble riddle of man's life in God. This new element which entered into and coloured the thought was extra-rational or supra-rational, and the new function was purely spiritual in opposition to the intellectual, and its essence was that of inward vision and spiritual ecstasy. It is true it was the reason of man which was still the appointed instrument of his salvation, and knowledge the path of redemption, but the old definitions of these no longer supplied the meaning which was now attached to them. The old language so long current and so tenacious of life still prevailed, but changed indeed in its meaning. The reason grasps the intellectual or supersensible world, not by means of the deductions which are based upon the perceptions which the senses furnish, or which spring from the analysis

of human self-consciousness, but by instant and immediate intuition, by a contemplation which is direct and free from all the categories of thought. The soul penetrates into the very presence of the ideal and eternal truth through contemplation of the Divine, the First and only Fair.

It did not rise from a consideration of nature and matter to the knowledge of the Spirit, it did not attain a conviction of the Absolute through dialectic processes, but it assumed the Absolute as the immediate truth, and sought to solve the problem of existence by a repudiation of all the processes of thought, and, in bold and sheer contempt of the past, by a desperate leap flung itself beyond the ladder of reason and of thought into the very presence of the Eternal and Infinite Source of all. The certainty of conviction which upheld the Neoplatonist was not the objective reality from which he drew logical conclusions, but the mystic vision of God which superseded all thought and all consciousness. No bolder system of Idealism has ever been conceived by the mind of man, and the profound religious impulse out of which it sprang endowed it with a power which has made it one of the primary influences of all subsequent religious aspiration which has sought to escape from the troublesome problems and practical or speculative limitations which hold the soul of man within the bounds of finite existence.[1]

[1] Redepenning, *Origines*, B. i. S. 21; Tschirner, *Der Fall des Heidenthum*, B. ii. S. 421.

The possibility of this Vision of God, which was the aim and dream of Neoplatonism, was based upon two ideas which in part resemble at least the teaching of the Gospel although they were not derived from it, and no doubt paved the way for many a devout Greek to pass into the Church. The first idea was, as has been said, that of a Divine Revelation and the need of it, and this is undoubtedly the expression of the religious mood of the age, and helped enormously in the spread of the Gospel. But Neoplatonism clung to the past, and found the doctrine of Revelation to be of no working value if its primary teaching of a transcendent and absolute Deity was to be retained. It is true the difficulty was met by the introduction of mediating agencies between God and man in the shape of the gods and demons of Paganism, but it was only modified, not obviated, by this intervention. From one point of view the old religions were vindicated, but man himself was not brought into immediate contact with God even by these on account of his own imperfection, impurity, and blindness. The prison house of the soul, which Plato had spoken of, had become the most oppressive consciousness of the serious man seeking salvation. From this he must be freed. Above its weaknesses and limitations he must rise. It is here on the side of man, not in his conjectures or speculations, but in his sacrifices and struggles, that we see how intensely in earnest the men of this age were. The way had been walked in by

many an Eastern sage, and that way was Purification. This was the second and the most significant element in the Neoplatonic system. This ascetic side cannot be directly or distinctly traced to Oriental influences, but there was something about the brooding East with its passion for renunciation which drew the men of this age as by a subtle charm. The Neoplatonists seem all to have turned their eyes that way. Plotinus set out for Persia with the unfortunate expedition of the ill-fated Gordion, and Jamblichus was a thorough Oriental in his spirit, although his mental equipment was furnished by Greece. It is on this subjective and personal side of Neoplatonism that we see how closely in contact the Christianity and Heathenism of this age were, for the asceticism which was the very essence of Neoplatonic salvation became the glory and ideal of the Christian saint. The effort was to free the soul from this burden of flesh, and ascend, not only beyond the region of sense, but even of thought, into the thin air of absolute existence, and there in this highest flight of the spirit come in contact and communion with Deity. This state of vision or ecstasy, as it was called, was the aim of all the Neoplatonists, and was but a foregleam of that time when the soul should return to God and lose all traces of the struggles, passions, and thoughts of this present life in Him, where there was neither movement, emotion, nor thought, but the complete and absolute Being which is described only in negations. This state of passive contempla-

tion, this divine vision, was not, and could not be, continuous in this life, and to the vast majority of men was for ever absolutely impossible. Hence in this touch of aristocratic exclusiveness lay one fatal weakness. To the few even this state of ecstasy was something to be sought for, but hardly to be expected. Plotinus, the greatest man of genius which the school ever possessed, and one of the noblest men of his age, attained to the vision but four times in six years according to his disciple Porphyry. Yet, in spite of the failure of Neoplatonism to realize the aim it held before it, the very greatness of the thought, the awfulness of this possibility, have never since lost their grasp upon the spiritual imaginations of men; and mystics in all ages, in their hours of hope, have dreamed of the time when they too should rise above the dark bondage of the sense and flesh into the absolute light and freedom of the Eternal mind.

Neoplatonism has well been called the setting sun of Paganism,[1] and the last expiring rays which flooded the world before it sank for ever filled the earth with "a light which never was on sea or land" —a light in whose mystic glory the failure itself was transfigured.

Plotinus, the perfect flower of Neoplatonism, did not appear until the third century, but the air was saturated with the thought which crystallized in his system, and Ammonius Saccas, the teacher whom he most honoured, was also the teacher of his most

[1] Huber, *Die Philosophie d. Kirchen Vaters*, S. 28.

distinguished Christian contemporary, Origen. Thus that speculative mode of thought which ultimately took the form of Neoplatonism was the prevailing intellectual influence of the age, especially in Alexandria.

The thinking of Christian men in such an atmosphere would naturally have a freedom, depth, earnestness, and passion which we do not find elsewhere. The intense intellectual preoccupation brought every subject into debate, and the Christian Church here not only felt called upon to present its truth to the intelligence of men, but gladly welcomed the opportunity. The beginnings of the great Christian school of Alexandria are hidden in the past, but, with the splendid university organization and magnificent library, it was inevitable that a school of Christian teachers and thinkers should grow up under these walls. The struggle on the part of the greatest of these teachers to vindicate the Gospel for the reason and the sympathies of mankind was conducted with a large-hearted generosity and intelligence which is generally absent from theological controversies. The ferocity of a Tertullian and the narrow intelligence of an Irenæus would have found but little to sympathize with in the leading minds of Alexandria in the second half of the second century. Men like Clement and Origen stood for an intelligent Christianity. They were unwilling to consent to the divorce of reason and faith, which meant in reality the destruction of both and the substitution for them of a mere consent or adherence to a Creed. The knowledge which was beyond the reach of the

vulgar and the faith which was beneath the contempt of the wise as standards of Christian character, found no place in the minds of these, the noblest spirits in the Christian Church of that age.

According to Baur, the Alexandrian school was the point of reconciliation between the bare, bald dogmatism of orthodoxy as represented by Irenæus and Tertullian on the one hand, and the extremes of Gnosticism which insisted on the absolute independence of any historical basis on the other. In other words, the opposition of faith and knowledge which these extremes represented was absorbed in an higher unity, and Alexandria represented this advance.[1] Without accepting Hegelianism as the true philosophy of history, one can at least recognize that the school of Alexandria stood for something higher and more hopeful than did any other body of Christian teachers, or than was developed by any other movement of Church life elsewhere.

The first of these writers with whom we have to do is Clement, or, to give his full name, Titus Flavius Clemens. He was probably born in Athens, and was a Greek in every fibre. His placid disposition, his sweet and sunny temper, a certain intellectual absorption, an apparent absence of what may be called practical interests, show the student and the thinker. He was steeped in the literature of his native land, and Homer rises to his lips so instinctively that we see the spell of the past had not been broken by his conversion to Christianity.

[1] Baur, *Vor. ü. Dogmen.*, B. i. S. 217.

But the old classic joys had lost their power to bring delight and soothe the restless soul. A new and deeper self-consciousness had been aroused, and far and wide men with the old classic training were wandering in search of a new inspiration which should go deeper and lift them higher than the old had done. Clement tells us he had many teachers, but all were found wanting until he came to Alexandria and felt the power of Pantænus, the head of the Christian Catechetical School. Here he established himself, and after the departure of Pantænus to the far East succeeded him as the head of the school. How long Clement remained in Alexandria, and when and where he died, are uncertain and to a large degree immaterial. His history has few events in it. It is the story of a student's life—the history of a mind. He is to a large degree outside the current of Church life, and seems to have had but little interest in most things which are the life of the busy man of the world. His writings show that quiet mind and easy thinking which prove the remoteness from the outside world which are the characteristics of the retired scholar. In that busy, restless, struggling age he is dreaming of the beauty of the past and the tranquil pleasures of a well-stored mind. His religion itself has something of the unreflecting beauty of its earliest days. The sunny childhood of man in Christ is the thought which Clement loves to dwell upon again and again—"The youth which knows no old age, always young, always growing." The Gospel brought peace to his uneasy

mind and met the needs of his craving spirit, but the deeper questions which are roused when the soul is writhing in anguish or burning with the heat of inward struggle he never knew. A serene, beautiful, and gentle nature, his soul lies spread out like a placid mountain lake in whose unruffled bosom the glories of earth and sky are all reflected, and whose depths are never torn by the hurricane or the volcano. The Christian spirit is here, but it speaks in the language of antiquity. Clement is neither an ecclesiastic nor a theologian in any sense which would at the present day be generally accepted. He had been an educated Pagan, and the only way which seemed open for him to justify his learning and save the credit of his teachers was to claim that their light, too, was from above, and that this knowledge which was the glory of the Greek had been borrowed from the Hebrew Prophets. The truth in whose interest this proposition was set forth, was that God was the Author of all truth. But Revelation being looked at from too purely an intellectual point of view, it was quite easy and, one may say, natural to reconcile the intellectual theories of the school with the truths of Revelation by a system of interpretation which had the approval of all the scholars of the age. So the Gospel was presented to the intelligent and thoughtful, in Alexandria at least, too much under the guise of philosophy and according to the speculative definitions of the schools.

The resemblance between much of the philosophy and theology of the age is so close that it is difficult

to define the true relations which exist between them. But the fact of the relationship between the contemporaneous philosophy and this Christian Gnosis in their fundamental principles and methods, as well as in their most important conceptions and definitions, is so close that it is impossible to say whether the Church teachers have borrowed from the philosophers, or whether the latter have appropriated these ideas by means of the prevailing religious syncretism which embraced so many Christian elements.[1] When Clement tells us that "The Greek philosophy, as it were, purges the soul and prepares it beforehand for the reception of faith, on which the Truth builds up the edifice of knowledge,"[2] we see a relation implied between the two which will cause all the philosophical speculations with which his mind is filled to have a Christian colour and a Christian bearing, and the Gospel will undergo a reinterpretation which will not make it more simple, universal, and intelligible. But at no time perhaps in the world's history was speculation more general or more free. A man could think as far as he was able without any danger from either religious or political authorities. The Christians alone seem to have been charged by thoughtful men with hostility to human thought and intellectual freedom. "There never was an age in which cultivated men thought and spoke so much about reason. 'It is necessary,' Celsus says, 'for one to accept reason and teachers

[1] Redepenning, *Origines*, B. i. S. 91.

[2] *Strom.*, B. vii. c. 3.

having reasonable doctrines, inasmuch as deception is sure to come to those who do not attach themselves to some such. Such a man is like those who without any reason believe the beggars of Cybele, the seers and priests of Mithras and Sabbadios, and to such an one happens the appearances of Hecate or other demonesses and demons. Evil men depending upon the ignorance of the easily-led bring them where they wish. So also it happens with the Christians. Some of these will neither accept nor give an account of that which they believe. They use the phrase, "Prove not, only believe," and "Thy Faith will save thee." "The wisdom of the world is a bad thing; foolishness, however, is good." "Examine not." . . . .' 'Why is it,' Celsus asks again, 'why is it a bad thing to be cultivated and to be anxious about the best kind of talk? To be prudent and appear so, how does this interfere with knowledge of God?'"[1]

The questions which cultivated men in the ancient world were asking, were the questions which the great teachers of Alexandria were attempting in all sincerity and truth to answer.

The questions above all others about God and His nature, about Revelation and the possibility of it, the questions which have worn the soul of this last century of ours, were the questions which lay heaviest on the minds of the serious men, both Pagan and Christian, in the second century. Clement was determined that his Christian faith

[1] Theodore Keim, *Celsus Wahres Wort*, S. 6, 7, 40.

should have a philosophical justification, and so he presents the doctrine of God in the speculative form in which he had received it, and approaches the whole subject from the side of the philosopher searching for the origin of things, and not of a man seeking his father. Like Philo before him, and the Neoplatonists after him, he defines God as that which remains after every definition and quality is abstracted. This utter negation, into which neither the mind nor heart of man can penetrate, seems to leave little of the Fatherhood of God which was the very foundation of the Christian life and faith. "God was utterly impassible, inaccessible to any movement of feeling, either pleasure or pain."[1] "He is unknown, unknowable, and unnamable."[2] "He is not in darkness or in place, but above both space and time, and qualities of objects."[3]

From the hopeless abyss of abstract speculation into which such logic led them, the Neoplatonist endeavoured to escape by his theory of 'Apathy'

[1] *Strom.*, B. vi. c. 9. [2] *Ibid.*, B. v. c. 12.

[3] *Ibid.*, B. ii. c. 2. Dr. Bigg, in his very careful study of Clement, sums up his doctrine as follows:—"We know not what He is, only what He is not. He has absolutely no predicates, no genus, no differentia, no species. He is neither unit nor number. He has neither accident nor substance. Names denote either qualities or relations. God has neither. He is formless and nameless, though we sometimes give Him titles, which are not to be taken in their proper sense—The One, The Good, Intelligence or Existence, or Father, or God, or Creator, or Lord. These are but honourable phrases, which we use, not because they really describe the Eternal, but that our understanding may have something to lean upon."—*Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, p. 63.

or 'Vision,' which, however, left him practically at the mercy of all the religious impostors of the age, who promised by means of magic to bring about that union with Divinity, which had, however, as its results neither a higher intelligence, a nobler will, nor a purer spirit, but was in effect the death of self-consciousness itself, and the ultimate destruction of all sense of personality. It was this very self-consciousness which was the plague of this age, and for whose extinction men in their despair of redemption were most passionately seeking. From this Clement was saved by the teaching of the Revelation of the Son of God. Amid the wreck of all personality, human and divine, which seemed to result from the course of speculation in the various branches of the Alexandrian philosophy, the person of Christ rose supreme, and gave that assurance for man's personality as well as God's which man needed, and deepened the self-consciousness of the individual to a degree which it had never known before. To all souls thus burdened with this new problem, and who were struggling against loss, the Gospel was the reaffirmation of their uncertain faith, and gave a value to the individual life and thought by what it did for both, which made the new faith a deep delight. How far these speculations had eaten into the soul we see at every point in our study of the master-minds of this generation in Alexandria. And so long as this city preserved her intellectual vitality and pre-eminence, the tone of thought was tinged with that

peculiar cast which has long been known as Neo-platonism.

Clement's Christian faith, strong as it was, did not save him from the influences at work in the intellectual atmosphere in which he lived. That mystical contemplation and spiritual isolation from the world about one, which is the characteristic result of the philosophical movement of the times, and which is such a distinctive feature of Alexandrian life, was ancient, not modern—Pagan, not Christian—and had that aristocratic taint which separates it widely from the simplicity of the Gospel. This mood drew a broad line of distinction between the Gnostic Christian or the True Gnostic, and the humble souls hungering and thirsting after righteousness. It looked with some contempt upon those who, amid the storm and stress of the world, lived a life full of battles they would not fly and of duties they would not shun.

The strength of the Gospel lay in the first centuries, as in all other centuries, not in the light which it might throw on the dark problems of speculation or the abstract difficulties of the philosopher, but in its power for life and in the ideal which it presented. The Gospel does not fear speculation, but it was, and is, on the side of life.

The interest in scholarship and literary matters was so great in Alexandria, that the attention of Christian teachers was necessarily very early fixed upon the literary inheritance of the Christian Church. Here, sooner than in other localities, the

mind was drawn towards the literary questions raised by the Evangelical and Apostolic writings. Here one of the most influential and cultivated of the Gnostic schools arose, and the evidence seems to point to it as the circle in which we are to look for the beginnings of the study of the New Testament literature. It was in Alexandria that the Hebrew Scriptures had been translated into Greek, and it was here that the mind of the Church seems first to have appreciated the extensive literature which it had inherited from the earlier generations. Yet even in Alexandria in the time of Clement there does not seem to have been any clearly defined body of Christian literature side by side with, and of the same authority as, the Septuagint. Clement apparently recognized all the Gospels and most of the Epistles as canonical in a sense, but the idea of canonicity, as applied to them, does not seem to be clearly defined in his mind. The way, also, in which he uses writings other than those included in our present Canon, indicates that either there was no clearly defined body of Christian literature in his day in Alexandria which had canonical authority attributed to it, or that Clement had not felt the necessity of arriving at any definition on this point. Both statements are most probably correct, for Barnabas and Clement of Rome are cited as Apostolic. Hermas is regarded as prophetic and of divine revelation. The Apocalypse of Peter, the Sibylline Writings, the Preaching of Peter, and the Didache are quoted as γραφή, and Clement

makes no distinction between the Canonical Gospels and the Gospels κατ' Αἰγυπτιους and καθ' Ἑβραίδος.[1]

In considering the writings of St. Paul, all the evidence goes to show that the Gnostics of Alexandria were among the first, if not the very first, to study these writings with a scientific interest, and to have most clearly recognized their importance, even although we admit that the first collection of them is to be attributed to Marcion. The admiration of the Gnostics emphasized the necessity of a closer study of the great Apostle, and some critics have found in the Alexandrian school what they call the first Revival of Paulinism. It is difficult to see the grounds upon which this statement rests, after one compares the practical ideal of the Apostle with the thought of life which is expressed by both Clement and Origen. It is true that a wider horizon and a nobler spirit is found in them than in any other portion of the Christian Church, and while these may be due, in part at least, to St. Paul, yet the hopeless differences between them would indicate no real depth of influence. St. Paul's writings seem to be perfectly familiar to Clement, but he interprets them, not according to St. Paul, but according to the prevailing ideas of his own age and school. He even seems to apologize for giving St. Paul such a high place.[2] The loftier tone and more spiritual insight of Clement are partly due to his own nature, and partly to the influences of the

[1] Holtzmann, *Einleitung*, S. 152.

[2] *Vid.* Bigg, p. 53.

philosophical inheritance from the school of Philo, whom Clement quotes with approval. That this spirit was encouraged and deepened by a study of St. Paul one can hardly question, but that the initiative did not spring from the Apostle seems to be evident from the whole current and trend of his thought. The moral and spiritual tone of the Church had been lowered by the increase in numbers and wealth. The gain, from the worldly point of view, had been enormous in the last half century, and the instinct which works so silently and so surely led men to see the ultimate victory of Christianity, or at least to feel it and follow it as the strongest force in society. The religion which was presented to these Pagans was often of the harshest and narrowest type, and they, in turn, vulgarized it still more.[1] A great task lay before the Church. In Alexandria in particular was the gravity of the crisis felt, and such as Clement felt the need of presenting the life of the Christian in all its fulness, freedom, and spirituality to this generation, so gross, so frivolous, so impulsive, and so ignorant. In the way in which this was done we will see both the strength and the weakness of Clement. It was the first great attempt, of which Christian history has

[1] "Crowds were pressing into the Church, mostly ignorant and undisciplined, some rich and wilful. They brought with them the moral taint, the ingrained prejudices of their old life. We learn from many sources that the same incongruous blending of the Gospel with Pagan superstitions, which recurred during the conversion of the Northern Barbarians, existed in some degree in the second and third centuries."—Bigg, p. 84.

had so many, and yet none have been more sincere or possibly better adapted to win the attention of the particular age, than the writings in which Clement tried to set before the Pagan World the breadth and richness of the Christian Revelation as the manifestation of the will and mind of God. A recent critic has called this effort of Clement "the boldest literary undertaking in the history of the Church."[1] He endeavoured to place the Christian religion before the eyes of man on a plain so high that he would see at once the energy, freedom, and greatness of the life which issued from it; but the imperfection which is stamped upon his work exists, not in the mere lack of arrangement and style, but in the greater and more important defects of a lack of the full appreciation of that Gospel which he was so anxious to set forth in a larger spirit than the men of his age had attempted. There were radical misconceptions lying at the root of some of his interpretations of the Christian truth, and there were also some which were due to the limitation of that Gospel which had appealed to him so strongly.

If we contrast the thinking of Clement on the great subject of the Christian life and the Christian ideal with that of St. Paul, we will see a wide difference between them—a difference, however, which will not tempt us to despise him, but will show us how then as now the forces of an age, even the most powerful and elevated, are not always working for the highest character, but need that Life which

[1] Harnack, *Dogmengesch.*, B. i. S. 505.

was given for the life of the world to be their centre and aim.

An examination of those cardinal features which form his ideal of the Christian life, contrasting them with those of St. Paul, will make more clear what has been here suggested.

"God's greatest gift is self-restraint," Clement says,[1] and in this phrase shows the strong antique spirit which still controls his thought of life. This ancient ideal presents life as the result of that calm and happy judgment which wisely decides between the too much and the too little. Reason is the guide, and reason also is the power, which brings its own judgment to a perfect fruition. When reason loses the control of the life, then follows moral disaster and ruin. The great enemy of life is the irrational. If one fails to follow reason, that one falls into sin, for sin is contrary to right reason. Moreover, disobedience to this reason is the generating cause of sin.[2] It is easy to interpret such language according to the purely classical idea, but Clement's Christianity stood him for more than that, and he undoubtedly meant by reason and the guidance which the soul received something more than the purely scientific culture which the earlier philosophical schools had emphasized. Yet the radical defect of the Greek mind was as clearly manifest in Clement as in any classical writer of antiquity. This genial, urbane, cultivated Athenian gentleman had seen much and read more, but the

[1] *Strom.*, B. ii. c. 20. [2] *Paid.*, B. i. c. 2, c. 13.

strange story of human passion, of wild outburst, of frenzied despair which shows the primitive elements of human nature at work, and which forms the background for the most polished and cultivated Paganism, does not lead him into any deeper or more exhausted psychology than that all which is needed is light, all which is required is to follow reason. Clement and the Greek Fathers were more sincere and thoughtful than their Pagan contemporaries, but the way in which they talk of sin and reason suggests the way Rousseau and the philosophers of the eighteenth century talked of nature. The men of the field interpreted Rousseau in a way he did not anticipate, and the monks in the Lybian Desert show us how superficial was the accredited mode of thought on this subject, which the philosophers might pass by with a few phrases, but which was driving many a plain man to the verge of madness with its incessant intrusion into the commonest affairs of life. Paganism had never been in the way of understanding sin.

Its conception of the Divine Nature, however lofty, was lacking in purity and spirituality, and, as a consequence, the moral and spiritual sense of the individual partook of the same defect. The old natural religions of Heathenism appealed to the instincts of human nature, because they were but a reflection of it and a justification of all its impulses. But there was nothing in these religions to satisfy the higher cravings of the spirit as it began to realize itself, and the coarse opposition which was

manifest in almost all of them brought one face to face with their weaknesses. The dualism of man's nature seemed to be only intensified and made more puzzling by the variety of appeals which the religions of Paganism made to the many sides of his being. Without realizing the significance of the situation, the thoughtful Pagan felt that religion had broken down without giving him any solution of the great problem of his own nature. Without seeking any speculative ground for his thought, or appreciating the abyss into which he was plunging, many a man who felt the passion for escape looked upon matter as the author of all his inward unrest and pain, and sought a path into the higher life through asceticism. Sin or the cause of man's unhappiness, whatever it may be called, is not a moral or spiritual state, or, if so, only indirectly, but the result of certain material conditions. Thus, while the problem is not in reality any nearer a solution than before, it is simplified apparently, and has lost the spiritual terror which it possessed, and approach to God seems far easier and more natural than when the soul was restless with the uneasy sense of something within, something in the very nature of man himself, which separates him from the Divine Being. The Gospel, in its teaching of a Creator and Father of all and the perfect goodness of all His works, asserted most emphatically that it was not in Creation or its laws, not in matter or the constitution of man, that the principle and root of his misery lay. Something else was the source, something far more subtle, tenacious, and

inflexible in its persistence, and far more difficult of apprehension—that is, something in the spiritual disposition of the man, his moral aims, and his spiritual relations. Inevitably then, so soon as a man had grasped, even in the slightest degree, the new situation, he found that the greatest problem of all was himself. A new spiritual history, and not the old material discipline of Pagan philosophy, was the characteristic fact of the Gospel. A most singular fact is that the old Pagan theory of asceticism, which is in such entire opposition to the Christian truth of Creation and the great central fact of the Gospel, the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, is and has been perpetually returning and finding a home in the Church, and its most passionate admirers are those who make the most positive and dogmatic affirmation of that Creed whose essential principles are, in fact, denied.

It need not be a matter of surprise, then, if we find, as we do find, in Clement the old leaven lingering in the new life. So strong was his instinctive repugnance to the gross matter which seemed the source of all that was repulsive and painful to the higher instincts, that he looked upon sin not as St. Paul did, but as a true Greek, not of the old classic period, but after the Greek spirit had been touched with the ascetic rigorism. More than that, it was hard for him to feel that the Son of God had in reality taken our nature upon Him. There was a latent element of Docetism which undoubtedly had its origin in this intense feeling of his about matter.

The conception of evil, as associated in some way with the environment of the soul, led instinctively to an asceticism which was soon highly developed in the Church, and a new tendency in sharp distinction from the sense of personal and spiritual evil which is associated with sin in the mind of St. Paul. This new interpretation of the problem has a certain dramatic value and mystical suggestions which give it an apparently greater philosophic depth and profounder religious significance than the spiritual attitude of the Apostle, but it is in reality a far more superficial thought and a far easier solution of the most oppressive consciousness which weighs upon the Christian man.

To Clement, as to all who take the ascetic view of evil, sin was not a power or an inclination so much as a specific act. The man, therefore, must know in order that he may avoid the doing or the leaving undone of certain things. That Clement does not state the matter in this crass and almost childish way is true, but when he asserts that the sources of sin are but two, ignorance and inability, and both dependent upon ourselves, he evidently does not regard the problem as a difficult one or beyond the power of the individual to solve.[1] All those questions which make the theoretical solution of the problem of man's redemption almost insoluble—the influence and extent of heredity, the constant pressure of the social forces around, the moulding power of education, the almost iron chain of habit—

[1] *Strom.*, vii. 16.

all these and a thousand other elements more subtle and mysterious, which occur to every thoughtful man, do not appear to discourage Clement in the idea of the possibility of human redemption through the new light which came into the world through the Son of God.

If ignorance is the origin of evil and sin, and knowledge of redemption and salvation, then sin will be a matter of degree keeping pace with knowledge, and some there will be who by no act of their own are not within the pale of salvation. In these inferences which Clement implies rather than draws, we see the old aristocratic taint of Paganism and Gnosticism which was latent in so much of the thought of this period, and which was to work so deeply into the life of the later ages.

When we compare Clement's interpretation of the idea of Law with that of St. Paul, we see the same wide divergence. The same one-sided intellectualism led to a misconception of the relation between the Old and New Testaments or Covenants, and to a consequent misinterpretation of the latter. The Old Covenant was the effort to educate the human race by a discipline suited to its state and development—a thoroughly philosophical idea. The New was but the continuation of the process. The character and method were the same. The differences were purely external, or in the character of those who applied the education. The Gospel was the New Law. This idea of the Law as being of the very essence of the New Revelation was so

thoroughly and widely accepted, that we are prepared to find the same attitude of mind and the same point of view among the Alexandrians as elsewhere. The statement differs in some respects, but the position taken is the same by Clement as by his predecessors or contemporaries. The identification of the two Covenants in principle and object rested upon the fact of their common source, the Logos, who inspired the Old as well as the New. The differences between them consisted only in matters of detail, but even here a higher stand and a nobler spirit is manifest than in Irenæus and the other writers of this age. They had developed the idea of the 'New Law' and applied it in the interest of the hierarchical tendencies of the growing organization, but Clement finds the historical parallels, which by means of the application of the allegorical interpretation were so abundant, all in the interest of the higher class of Christians, the true Gnostics. His theory of the historical relations is not any truer than the other, but it is a matter well to be considered, whether, if it had prevailed, it would have wrought as much injury to the cause of the Gospel as the development of a sacerdotal caste with its claims to authority and government which prevailed through so many centuries of the Christian Church.

In Clement's interpretation of the idea of Faith he also falls far below the meaning of the great Apostle. His prevailing thought seems to be that of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as belief in the fulfilment of God's promises in the future. If this Epistle is of

Alexandrian origin, as is held by the majority of the most competent critics, we find in Clement but a continuation of the earlier Alexandrian thought on this subject. But even with this difference of interpretation it would still be possible to place faith in the very forefront of the spiritual life, and see in it the spiritual expression of the living force which moved the soul. But with Clement faith was merely a subordinate element in the Christian life, and knowledge was the primary factor of the spiritual development. Knowledge was more than faith.[1] Faith was but the imperfect intellectual apprehension of divine truth, and not the personal trust and fellowship with Christ as in St. Paul.[2] In the order of spiritual development faith was first and lowest, followed by knowledge and love, which completed the process by which the soul attained God. The true position which faith occupied in the mind of Clement may perhaps be seen in the historical process which he sees in the world's education. The order is from heathenism to faith, from faith to knowledge, and from knowledge to love. Now it is perfectly evident that if the difference between heathenism and faith is great, one would infer an equal difference existing between faith and knowledge. If, on the other hand, the distance between heathenism and faith is small, as is suggested by some language of Clement, then the interval between faith and knowledge would also be diminished. But Clement was not a systematic thinker, and his

[1] *Strom.*, vi. 794. [2] *Ibid.*, vi. 13, 12; iv. 18.

language is often such as to indicate a lack of clearness of perception and firmness of grasp in many particulars.[1] It is knowledge, not faith, which leads man to that everlasting contemplation, where, free from all imperfection, he is borne on through the mystic stages of spiritual development to the Eternal Vision. It is important to understand, if possible, the reasons which led Clement to take such a different view on such a significant point as this, especially since there are evidences that the breadth and nobility of spirit of the great Apostle had found an echo in his heart. Some few suggestions may be made here, which, without claiming to be exhaustive, will at least show that there was an actual difference between Clement and St. Paul, and that this difference had actual grounds which are ascertainable by a painstaking student. In the first place, there were elements of Docetism in Clement's view of the person of Christ, which prevented him feeling towards Him that personal and passionate devotion which is the very heart of the Apostle's life. This is no mere question of definition or difference in language, but is radical, fundamental, and vital. Clement did, no doubt, love Jesus Christ, and gladly and constantly recognized Him as his Saviour, but He was to him something less and something different than He was to St. Paul. The difference was that of

"Moonlight unto sunshine
As of water unto wine."

[1] *Strom*, vii. 10.

In Clement Jesus Christ approaches too nearly a mere principle or law of human history to preserve those immediate personal relations which were vital with St. Paul. He seems sometimes to represent only a stage in the divine process. Faith therefore could never become to Clement that personal relation, that individual union of the soul with its Saviour, which it was to St. Paul.

Another element which diminished the value of faith as St. Paul understood it among the Alexandrians was the predominant intellectual inheritance which they received, not only through their Greek blood, but also through the prevailing influences around them. The spirit of the Neoplatonist was pre-eminently that of Clement. The value of intellectual effort and the certainty of its perfect fruition was his guiding impulse. He believed in knowledge, not in a broad and wise way, but in almost a narrow and certainly a very absorbing way. It was the only path by which man might reach God, and it was knowledge, not in the large sense of the total apprehension of the man, but only the narrower range of his purely intellectual faculties. This knowledge so attained along the path of intellectual perception was the root of the soul's best life. He who knows God thus is holy and virtuous. The Gnostic, therefore, is the only pious man.[1] What Clement meant was, with a slight difference, what Plotinus meant. His Gnostic was the intellectual aristocrat who could reach heights of spiritual ex-

[1] *Strom.*, vii. 7.

perience not given to the poor and humble. This deadly taint was not felt consciously by Clement, but there seems to have been an uneasy restlessness at times which suggests an unconscious dissatisfaction.

The actual progress of the history of the Church also involved him in some uncertainty on this point. The claims of growing orthodoxy were always pushing the simply dogmatic definition of faith, as the objective Creed of the Church, into prominence, and destroying, if not the validity, at least the significance and importance, of the subjective and original meaning of the word. This pressure was strong upon Clement, and yet, as a student of the Scriptures of the New Testament, he saw a quite different and, to his earnest and thoughtful spirit, a far deeper meaning there.

The character of the mass of Christians was discouraging to one who was striving to draw his ideal from the writings of the Apostles. Yet the gentle and loving spirit which looked out from its closet upon this tumultuous and degraded life which surrounded it, was unwilling to deny to any the gift or power of faith if he bore the name of Christian. He was thus led, perhaps unconsciously, to lower the meaning of faith, and taking from it its spiritual character and value, he gave it the popular objective meaning. Yet there is always the feeling that it is of very great importance, and he believes that the Christian life begins with it, but that it runs but a short distance, and then the true and growing Christian rises to the loftier heights of Christian

Gnosticism. Yet the use of Gnosis and Pistis interchangeably, which sometimes occurs in Clement, shows a wavering and a lack of precision which must be recognized.

But it is in the final and ultimate expression or interpretation of the Christian life that we find the true import of his language and the key to his thought. The idea of Spiritual Sonship, which is the expression of the Christian ideal in St. Paul, is replaced in Clement by that of the Christian Gnostic. If we ask ourselves what are the characteristics of the true Gnostic, we discover that on the subjective side it is intellectual, culminating in ecstasy and the vision of the Eternal. On the external or objective side it is strongly ascetic. This asceticism, as can be easily shown, is not a necessary or inherent element in the Christian conception of piety. It was the dominant note of the moral effort at reform which was the characteristic of the second century. The individual life of the Christian was not seen to be, or asserted to be, based on any thoroughly understood and consciously recognized Christian principles which would lead to a definite and positive conception of piety in opposition to the prevailing asceticism. This asceticism was, in its origin as well as in its character, not only essentially contradictory to some of the most fundamental Christian truths, but it was also legal, materialistic, and unspiritual. Laying the emphasis so heavily on asceticism as a primary object of the life, made that life negative and external in its character, and destroyed the lofty idealism of

the Christian spirit. Instead of finding the ideal in the sonship of man to God through the living Christ dwelling in the soul and developing the natural energies and character in a normal and healthy way, there was placed in its stead a narrow and legal asceticism which was exclusive and aristocratic, and, from the Christian standpoint, unnatural.[1]

The legalism of Clement, however, did not express itself in the elaborate, overwrought manner which was characteristic of some of the writers of his day, and which was the overwhelming tendency of the Church at large; yet the principles were there, although with noble inconsistency he seems to refuse his own conclusions. He believed in something far, far better and higher than the life of the common Christian of his day, but instead of finding the common foundation for all in the more thorough and complete identification of each soul with Christ, he divides the general body into two classes, leaving the vast mass on a lower and almost hopeless level, while the few who were the true Gnostics should rise to the real life of the soul in the contemplation of that awful vision which was promised to those who had completed the long and painful struggle after this spiritual detachment from the world and the flesh. This is undoubtedly the aim of the Gnostic, the Mystic, and the Neoplatonist. But was it the aim of St. Paul? Can one trace its fellowship directly to inspiration from the life and spirit of, and fellowship with, Christ? If not, then

[1] Rothe, *Vorlesungen über Dogmen.*, B. i. S. 264–274.

the type of piety aimed at is not the best however beautiful it is, and the world is such that only the best can save it. Clement believed that the world would be saved, but his optimism did not always, if ever, mean that passionate sureness which comes to the soul that has flung itself completely and for ever upon the infinite mercy and love of Christ, but rather in a feeling that man has always the power of reformation. The long, long struggles, the miserable failures, the painful sense of incompetency and fruitlessness, which wrung the souls of those who were closest to the actual lives of men, made but an academic impression upon him—a calm, pure, and noble soul well balanced and serene, upon whom the tragedy of human life seemed to rest but lightly. The tragic is not all of human history; but take it out, and what is left? Clement was a quiet student, and his influence was exerted probably only over the few.

A far more imposing figure and a far more powerful influence is Origen, his great pupil. Unlike his teacher who was a Greek, Origen was an Egyptian, a full-blooded Copt. His father, Leonidas, died in the persecutions of Septimius Severus, and his fiery son cheered him on. He feared neither life nor death, and, unlike his great teacher who was never carried away by the frenzy, he craved a martyr's crown. He begged his father in prison to stand fast and fear not. "Take heed not to charge your mind on our account," his heroic son told him.[1]

[1] Eusebius, *H. E.*, vii. 2.

The fierce fires which surrounded his early manhood entered still more deeply into his blood. The calm and pleasant optimism which characterizes his teacher has given place to a more sombre tone. Tossed out at an early age into the great stream of life, compelled to struggle with the most adverse circumstances, he soon made it manifest that one of those beings who change the course of events and cut deep into the life of the world had appeared. With an iron constitution, an indomitable will, and an enormous capacity for work, he soon began that marvellous career, the first of its kind in the history of the Christian Church. There was about him that charm which genius, and genius alone, exercises. All men felt it, and few have been so loved and hated as he in his long warfare. The invincible sincerity of his mind, the intense ardour of his nature, the passionate longing of his soul for men, made him, although a layman for the larger part of his career, the most striking figure in the history of the Church up to this time. The conditions under which he worked were for the most part favourable. He was in an atmosphere where scientific and philosophical studies were more prized than in any other city of the Empire. Two generations had been preparing the way for the presentation of Christianity under the forms of the science and philosophy of Alexandria. When we touch Origen we seem to come in contact with a life whose pulse is almost modern in its eager, intellectual activity and spiritual passion. His system stands alone in his age, and

was not equalled in intellectual grasp and influence until it was superseded in the West by Augustine's *Civitas Dei* two centuries later. Unlike Augustine, however, Origen was not far in advance of his age. He summed up in himself all the past, and thus laid the foundation for the advances which were to be made in the future.[1] With the insight which is the gift of the great discoverer, he saw the lines within which Christian thought would for ever move, and strange to say, as one of his most appreciative critics has well remarked, "Beyond the circle which Origen's thought described, the orthodox teachers of all confessions have refused to pass." He was indeed one of those whom Plato calls "A chief of the golden race," for his name and memory have been an inspiration for all the noblest and most earnest souls who have loved truth with a quenchless passion and sought it with unfaltering faith. Before him there had been none like him, and since his day but few who had the same wide range and the same stimulating energy. Among the moderns, Schleiermacher has been called the Origen of the nineteenth century, and the points of resemblance between the most remarkable man in the Christian Church in the second century and the greatest theological genius of the nineteenth are many and striking.

Origen had been placed in charge of the catechetical school, probably immediately after the flight of Clement, and the work of his life began. In

[1] Harnack, *D. G. M.*, B. i. S. 525.

order to teach, one must study. The pressure of the endless stream of questions from persons of all ages, classes, and stages of intellectual development acted like fire on his eager mind. He flung himself into such an intense course of study, and pursued it with such a tireless passion, that it is difficult to understand how he lived through it. His work was carried on under the shadow of the University, then the freest and most active in the Empire. Speculation, which was so congenial to the Greek, was now tinged with the new and powerful element which characterizes that later development called Neoplatonism. Ammonius Saccas was teaching in Alexandria at this time, and hither came Plotinus who, when he had heard him, declared, "At last I have found a man." Here he remained, steeping himself in the thought of this great teacher. Origen also, although hardly at the same time, is said to have listened to this same teacher, and one cannot doubt that he who was so sensitive to all earnest and noble living or thinking could not have remained unaffected by such a strong and original influence as that of Ammonius Saccas. Eusebius, in his history, gives a long list of the philosophical writers whom Origen is said to have studied.

Yet, however abstract his speculations are, however philosophical the language in which he clothes his thought, there is an air of sincerity and reality about all he said which sprang from his own wide experience and his contact with life at almost every point in the vast circle. He had travelled not

only in the East, but in the West. He had seen the greatest cities of the Empire. He had moved in the society of the learned and the great as well as associated with the ignorant and the obscure. The man who knew how to live like a monk of the Thebaid had also been the guest of an Empress. He concentrated in himself more intellectual force, spiritual energy, wide learning, and deep experience than any man of his age, and this whole vast accumulation was inspired with one overwhelming and persistent motive, the presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the heathen world in which he lived.[1] In this cause his life was one long, unwearied struggle. As a child he had longed for martyrdom, and as an old man he found it; and the same heroic note runs through all the intervening years.

When we come to consider Origen in his relation to the life of the Church, we discover that there are few subjects of thought which did not engage his eager intellect. But the one subject which was the most continuous object, not only of his thought but of his labours, was the Holy Scriptures. He is the first great Biblical scholar, and did more perhaps than any man that ever lived to establish and fix the nature and limits of this study. He seemed to realize the importance of his task, and the energy with which he carried on his labours is witnessed in the fragments which remain. These, like the ruins of some gigantic temple, fill one with amazement and awe. As an interpreter of Scripture, he estab-

[1] Redepenning, *Origines*, B. i. 336.

lished a method which ruled for centuries, and which, although in some respects an enormous advance on the crude methods then existing for the most part in the Church, yet left an heritage of confusion and unreality in the field of Biblical exegesis which belongs to no other branch of philological investigation. The influence of his method can be seen in all that Origen ever wrote, as well in his strictly theological speculations as in his commentaries. It engaged so much of his thought, that he systematized it and handed down a theory which was adopted by all the orthodox teachers who followed him with few exceptions; and in turn it became the method which prevailed most generally in the Eastern and Western Churches until the day of the Reformation. This method is called the Allegorical. It was not an invention of Origen, but was the universal method of all interpreters, both Classical and Hebrew, at this time. More than that, we can find the beginnings of it far back in Hebrew history and also among the Greeks. Plato allegorizes, and the Stoics devote much thought to the subject. The causes of its growth are very easy of discovery. A vigorous and progressive people in the course of time drifts away from the position of its earlier years. The intellectual attitude and the religious language of the past have about them a touch of unreality, viewed from the standpoint of the present. Yet men cling to the past with a greater tenacity, the farther removed they are from it.

In the absence of all scientific methods of historical

investigation, that ancient past will be filled with the ideas and sentiments of the present. The language, the literary forms are different, but this difference is the result of intention, and he who has the secret can easily, naturally, and unconsciously reconcile the past with the present. It is not a deliberate violation of philological laws, but all sacred literature is supposed to be free from the same rigid subjection to these principles which govern the common speech of men. Moreover, speech was a mysterious thing to the men of the past. Words seemed to have such an indefinite, almost infinite power. They might mean so much, and when one age endeavoured to reunite its life with that of a more remote one, language became one of the mysterious channels through which this unseen life had been constantly flowing. As a German writer has said, "The simplest means of harmonizing an old, traditional, and sacred literature with the new culture and modern spirit which comes to a progressive people, is the allegorical. Allegory meets us in the case of all ancient literary collections, especially those of a sacred character. There is an allegorical interpretation of the Indian Vedas as well as of the Koran."[1] In Alexandria the first great representative of the movement in the spiritual life of the higher intelligence of his age was Philo, and he also gave the first systematic expression to this theory of interpretation, uniting in himself the two currents of Greek and Hebrew thought on this

[1] Siegfried, *Philo von Alexandria*, S. 9.

subject. In him also the prevailing tendency was re-enforced by the necessity of his position. His Greek culture and his Hebrew traditions seemed in direct antagonism to each other. By the path of Allegory he rose to a reconciliation which was real, however arbitrary and unsatisfactory the process of readjustment was.

This system of interpretation having become the generally recognized method of all the most influential writers of the age, it was inevitable that when the Christian Church had brought under its influence the cultivated and intelligent, these should bring with them the intellectual habits in which they had been trained. The Christian Gnostics of Alexandria may be regarded as the first representatives of the influence of Christianity upon the cultivated classes, and the allegorism of Philo and the Stoics was extended by them to the writings which are pre-eminently Christian—that is, to the Gospels themselves. It would seem, if it is permissible to evaporate the historical element from the ancient Hebrew writings, and find in them cosmical and esoteric truths which can be known only to those initiated into the correct method, that this same method could be applied to the historical narratives of the Gospel. This was done, and the facts of the Gospel history disappeared behind a cloudy and fantastic system of speculation. The original and inherent vice of allegorism lay in the fact that it taught one to substitute imaginary spiritual truth for hard fact, or change some spiritual

principle into a real event. History was allegorized, and allegory was crystallized into history. The hard barrier between fact and fancy melted away, and the ease with which any speculation might be defended or proved made allegorism fatal to all intellectual veracity or clearness of vision. Objective and subjective mingled in one ever-shifting cloud, where poetry, reason, imagination, history, fact, and conjecture were hopelessly confused. The motive which prompted and justified the allegorical method was the great Platonic principle, "That nothing is to be believed which is unworthy of God."[1] In the hands of a man like Origen, allegorism was used to reconcile science and faith—to prove that the difficulties which the intellect of the age found in many of the statements of the Old Testament, in reality offered no obstacle to a belief in the great truths of the Gospel. As all men of culture at this period accepted the allegorical method, it was therefore no ingenious or suspicious discovery of the great Christian teacher. He only systematized and laid down a few general principles and laws for its application, these in fact being, generally speaking, only a *résumé* of Philo with the keynote in the words of St. Paul. One sees the best side of allegorism in Origen, and although the dangers are apparent, and the gross error of it is perfectly clear, yet the genius of the man saves it from appearing in all its feebleness and absurdity. The greatest weakness of it, which, strange to say, was also its

[1] Bigg, p. 51.

greatest strength, lay in the fact that the truth of the Gospel was stripped of the defence which a strict and historical interpretation of the documents offered, and was laid open to the arbitrary fancy of every theorizer. Each speculation, however strange or foreign its origin, could be justified by allegory; and all the excrescences, misunderstandings, foreign intrusions, and historical developments find their justification and explanation in the allegorical method. How utterly unreliable, weak, and fantastic the theory is when applied to history, can best be seen, not in Origen, but in a book of the nineteenth century, Newman's *Essay on Development.* Yet the effect of this system is clearly seen in the writings and thought of Origen. We do not find in him, although a most faithful and devout student of the Scriptures, what we may call a really Biblical theology. His thought has been profoundly influenced, if not shaped, by the powerful currents of his age, and he finds in Scripture simply the evidence and proof of the definitions and ideas which he uses, and whose expression is so largely, at least in form, Neoplatonic.

Origen accepted, in addition to what we would call the Canonical Writings, although the word itself does not occur in his writings, a large number which have now only an historical value.[1] He not only accepted the Septuagint edition of the Old Testament, but regarded it as inspired, and the Hebrew version as incorrect. This, not because

[1] Redepenning, *Origines*, B. i. S. 239.

of any historical reasons, but because the Hebrew did not justify so well as the Greek the theories he had formed and the interpretations he had set forth. The way in which Origen quotes Ignatius, Clement of Rome, Barnabas, and the Shepherd of Hermas as inspired, goes to show that age, and not origin, had most to do with his selection, and that the idea of canonicity was still indefinite. It has been said that he was much under the influence of St. Paul, and that he marks one of those attempts which seem to occur at intervals in the Church, to recover it from the low and secular spirit which degrades and robs it not only of its power, but of its truth and beauty. It may be in the larger spirit and the more intense earnestness with which Origen set forth the essentially spiritual and religious character of the Gospel he was influenced by St. Paul. But it must also be borne in mind that Neoplatonism was an assertion of the spirituality of God and of the high and mysterious quality of those relations which united men with Him. The language which Origen uses is generally more philosophical than Scriptural in its form, yet this in truth would not be decisive. The more closely one studies the thought of this great writer on the most fundamental ideas of the Christian life, and notes the language which is used, the more apparent it is that there are differences of no minor importance between him and the great Apostle. Yet his life was perhaps one of the most truly Apostolic in its characteristic modes of expression of any man of the age. Although a stern

ascetic himself, he attached no importance to asceticism, and gave the most spiritual and evangelical interpretation to the idea of abstinence. The larger and more fully his life developed, the more he disregarded the legal ideas of religion, and thereby ran counter to the strong legal and ascetic tendencies of his age.

The material for a knowledge of the life and work of Origen is so abundant that it will not be necessary to dwell further upon the biographical or purely historical aspects of his career, but rather to consider more closely and critically some of the elements which are characteristic of his system of thought, and how these were related to his environment, and also what, if any, correspondence exists between his ideal of the Christian life and character and that of St. Paul, which is the immediate object of this investigation.

When we turn to an examination of Origen's discussion of the problem of sin, we see more clearly than in any writings since St. Paul how profoundly the whole subject, under its new presentation, was affecting the thoughts of men. In shifting the origin of sin and evil from matter, where it had been placed by the vast majority of the schools, and which was the prevailing conception of Paganism, to man, the interest in the problem was intensified. The significance of life became more dramatic, and the tragic features of history stood out with a sharpness and boldness which we miss in most of the men of these earlier centuries. How keenly Origen felt the

difficulties of the problem, and how little he understood St. Paul, can be seen in the theory of a pre-existing state in which sin had its origin. It may be said that this does not show any disposition to weaken the significance of the fact or lessen its importance because the mysterious and ghastly tragedy is only pushed back, but it is pushed back out of sight as well as out of knowledge. Feeling the oppression and weight of it, as he did, it was a relief to have this more remote origin assigned to it, and the motive was probably not so much philosophical consistency as spiritual relief. It is true a philosophical motive was there, and in seeking for the origin of sin he needed no justification. But the way in which he explains this beginning shows a certain lack of spiritual clearness and moral certainty which led to confusion and weakness or originated in them. He thinks of some timeless existence in which the created spirit, dwelling in the presence of God, is lulled into security by this perfect contemplation. Then pride and self-will present themselves, and the soul falls into sin. But this assumption loses sight of the fact that the very heart of the blessedness of the life in God is in the profound sense of security and peace which life in Him bestows upon the spirit.

The pleasant optimism of Clement has disappeared in Origen, and a sterner and more sombre feeling prevails. Yet, like all under the influence of the Greek or Classical spirit, he does not treat the problem in a way which is at all satisfactory.

Instead of regarding life, the world, and matter as simply the means in and through which the spirit might manifest its character, the philosophical view, as well as the popular feeling, was that matter in itself was evil and the source of evil; and by this means was justified the thin, superficial psychology and the shallow ethical conceptions of the age. Approaching the subject from the religious point of view, Origen asserted that sin was the loss of the divine life or image. The moment we examine this statement, we see that he has confused the true relation of cause and effect, and that this definition has behind it no conception of sin as a positive and efficient agency which profoundly conditions the spiritual life of man. Rather is the negative and intellectual definition the source of this language. It is emptiness, want, a miserable accident of human nature which has no existence in itself. The idea of a moral bias, a spiritual attitude in which the whole energy of the nature may be concentrated, is not suggested by these words—that is, sin is not the expression of a positive moral and spiritual state.

A certain light is thrown upon Origen's estimate of sin by the fact that while he was perfectly willing to regard it as a matter of inheritance, he did not by any means believe in the inheritance of its correlative guilt—the implication being justified that sin was not of such an abhorrent nature as to constitute in and of itself a state of spiritual guiltiness before God. That he was deeply impressed by the

awful problem which presented itself is perfectly apparent, but that he could deal with it in a way to satisfy the higher needs of the Christian character does not seem so apparent. He had forced the origin of it back into a state of pre-existence, and this theory compelled him, in the face of certain historical references in the Scriptures, to fall back upon another theory to explain them away—that is, upon his Allegorism. One wishes that he had dealt more earnestly with the actual facts of his own experience; but he was a child of his age, and that an age which had much to learn of the higher meaning of life and the Gospel.

In his unsatisfactory definition of the will as a mere power of choice, he had not penetrated deep enough to realize its true moral nature. He asserted, in opposition to the harsh determinism of the Gnostics, the absolute freedom of the human will; but his idea of freedom was simply the perpetual ability to make new choices without reference to the organic relation between the life itself and the moral nature, which is constantly realizing itself in and through the will viewed as its manifestation. This conception of freedom, and the will as the power of choice in each particular case, is obviously unsatisfactory.

The will is something more than the mere power of choice, and freedom is of little value when it leaves a man absolutely and eternally within the possibility of reversing his whole moral character at will. The sense of moral development and the

growth in higher spiritual strength have their safeguards and sources of confidence destroyed when all the results of spiritual culture are left at the mercy of a purely arbitrary choice. These defects in Origen's thought were the results of the shallow thinking of his age on the moral nature of man. The strong pressure also of the classic definitions prevented him discovering in his own spiritual history the lines of a nobler and truer conception of the great moral problem. Wherever the antique spirit has prevailed, there we see the absence of deep appreciation of the tragic nature of the individual character viewed on its moral side. The desperate language of Augustine may repel many, but the element in him which creates this repulsion has its source in the Ancient World, and is not the direct or immediate issue of the new Christian inspiration which moved him so deeply. The intense moral earnestness, the awful sense of man's tremendous destiny, these are Christian, and these are present in Augustine as they were not in Origen or in any other writer of the Early Church since the last of the Apostles had closed his eyes in death.

In his conception of the Law and its relation to the Gospel, we see the same wide diversity in Origen from the Pauline idea which we find running through the entire period. The great changes which take place in the world advance slowly. The individuals who represent the new forces are almost invariably men of their own age—that is, they are not suddenly emptied of their inherited beliefs, habits of

mind, and forms of thought which characterize their generation, but rather are transferred with all these into a new world of ideas, a new spiritual atmosphere, and are brought under the influence of new motives. Universal modes of thought are not easily discredited, and they are the less likely to be so when all parties start from the same fundamental ideas. The controversies within the Church had resulted in the assertion of the unity of Revelation as against the various Gnostic theories which had been set forth in criticism of the Old Testament. This principle of unity practically covered every question which might arise, and very early in the Christian history the identity between the Old and the New Covenants had been established. The differences which existed, and there were some, were not, as has been seen, differences in principle, but only differences of degree. The New Covenant was a legal one like the Old. This conception seems never to have been questioned. It was often and largely modified, but it was never rejected except by heretical sects whose antinomianism excited the horror of all earnest and sincere Christians. Origen accepted this principle without apparently questioning it. Christ was the New Lawgiver, and the Gospel was the New Law.[1] There were differences between them undoubtedly, but they were purely formal, and it was easy, fatally easy, to find the whole Gospel in the Old Testament by means of the allegorical method of interpretation. The facility with which this principle was applied,

[1] Origen, *Contra Celsus*, iv. 22, vii. 7; *De Prin.*, iv. 24.

and the wonderful range which the Old Testament permitted to the allegorizing fancy, made it a favourite field of interpretation, and in one place it seems as if Origen was inclined to prefer the Old Testament to the New. This attitude may have been assumed, however, as has been conjectured by one of his most careful critics, in order to weaken or oppose the attacks of Gnosticism.[1] But it was from no really legal turn of mind that this seeming preference on the part of Origen sprang. He belonged to what would now be called the radical liberal wing of the Church in Alexandria. The two parties who are clearly to be distinguished are those of the allegorists and the literalists, or of orthodoxy pure and simple and the party of science and culture. The higher spiritual element in the Church was represented by the allegorists. It was by means of the allegory that they avoided the difficulties of a hard, uncritical interpretation based upon the crudest literalism. The other side, that of strict conservative orthodoxy, held to the narrowest verbalism, and reduced the Gospel often to something not much higher than the Paganism about them. This was also the party of the monks who seem to have been then, as so generally in the history of the Church, leaders in stupidity and ignorance. So dull and unspiritual were the tendencies at work in this element in the Church, that it is asserted that they went so far as to attribute a body to God. This was also the ecclesiastical party which, re-enforced by the tend-

[1] Redepenning, B. i. S. 279.

encies at work in other portions of the Church, was fighting against the larger and nobler spirit which feared the transformation of the spiritual brotherhood into a mere organization with a hard and legally defined code of faith and morals. The 'Rule of Faith' in Alexandria was at this time not what it was elsewhere, or what it afterwards became here—that is, a strictly defined Creed—but rather was it only the common and essential elements of salvation as then generally understood, and with a large and generous inclination not to push the matter of definition too closely. Origen's experience of the legalistic interpretation of the Gospel in his own person, and his conflict with the hierarchical element in his own age, were bitter and harsh enough, and led him to a larger and nobler feeling for the essential freedom of the Gospel. The way in which Demetrius ordered Origen to return from Palestine because he had, at the request of the Bishops there, lectured before the clergy, shows how arrogant the ecclesiastical power was becoming even in Alexandria.[1] The references also which he makes to the ecclesiastics of his age show that they were more like some of the later representatives of that class, than the idealizing admiration for them which is so often felt justifies. With all these forces Origen was at war. The parting of the ways was at hand. The Church must choose between the inner and spiritual in Christianity, or the merely outward and external. The West was already making her choice. She

[1] Eusebius, *H. E.*, B. vi. 19.

chose the outer and emphasized it as a bond of union, fearing the influences which were at work in the development of local and national sentiment.

With Origen, on the other hand, the invisible Church was emphasized more than by Clement or any of his predecessors.[1] This idea is not, as has sometimes been supposed, a conception of Modern Protestantism which is to be regarded as an absurd makeshift, but was a truth which was seized upon by the wisest and best man of the Ancient Church, in order to solve the awful problem which was presented to him in the actual state of the Church before him. He saw the danger which threatened the Church as by instinct, and tried to lead it to a higher and truer thought of the Gospel than that which was to be derived from a merely legalistic conception of it. But the initial mistake lay in the definition of the Gospel as a law, no matter how this statement might be refined and softened in application. A principle has its strength in itself, and not in any rigid or lax application of it. The issue is direct, immediate, and inevitable, though perhaps misunderstood through the inability of men to see the order and relation in which the phenomena of history stand to its laws.

The allegorism which saved the Alexandrians from the unspiritual and anti-Christian elements of the Church life of their day was, however, only a makeshift. It did not deal directly with the underlying principles, and later it became one of the most

[1] *Contra Celsus*, iv., vi.

powerful weapons in establishing all ecclesiastical assumptions and theological decrees.

In the way, then, of a true statement of the relation between the Law and the Gospel, it cannot be said that Origen made any advance on the commonly accepted thought of his age. The distinction between the two, which was vital and essential, escaped the eyes of all except a few, and they saw it only in a dim and distorted way.

Since Origen shared in the common misconception of antiquity, that the reason, and not the will, was the effective and prevailing source of conduct, it was inevitable that he should regard sin in the light in which he did. When the generally received assumption of the practically identical nature of the Old and New Covenants was added to this, it was impossible that he should grasp the order and strength of St. Paul's thought, or see the relation of those great living convictions of the life and its ideal which issued out of his Christian consciousness.

In Origen's treatment of Faith the old Greek idea maintains itself almost with the same strength which is manifest in the other writers of this age, but his loftier spirituality and his larger freedom from the bondage of organization and the ecclesiastical theories which were pushing rapidly to the foreground, kept him from going so far astray as others. The Greek mind never felt the claim of the outward organization as the Latin or Western mind did, and the interpretation of faith, even if not Pauline, had an element in it which was not manifest

to the same extent in the Western branch of the Church. Faith as mere dead orthodoxy Origen would not recognize. The confusion and uncertainty into which Clement was plunged by the spectacle of great numbers who had no real conception of the Gospel and stood to it only as members of the organized Church, did not disturb Origen to the same extent. He deliberately rejected this external relation as having any meaning. He recognized not different stages in the same process in these various kinds of Christians, but two kinds of faith—the mere acceptance or holding as true on the one hand, and the spiritual apprehension or consecration on the other—and rejects the former as worthless.

Origen rejects as unhesitatingly as Clement the naturalism of the Gnostics, but, like Clement, he does not escape the influence which they exercised in the order and definition of the Christian truth. Faith is subordinate to knowledge, or Pistis to Gnosis. Like Clement and his Gnostic contemporaries, Origen made Gnosis the principle of the religious life. In the interpretation of faith itself we see the influence of this intellectual tone. The influence of the Alexandrian type, as represented in the Epistle to the Hebrews, seems to have been permanent and the inheritance which every Alexandrian writer claimed. As this, in turn, had its origin undoubtedly in the Greek spirit at work there, we find it continued through all the centuries during which the Church at Alexandria was a powerful element in the general

life of the Church. When faith is regarded as the affirmation of the credibility of some truth or the intellectual judgment upon evidence, we at once perceive that we are in a different atmosphere from that in which the Apostle moved, and that this conception of faith is intellectual and philosophical rather than religious and spiritual.[1]

Another change had taken place, which widened the chasm and introduced such confusion into the meaning of the word that it seems almost impossible for the Church to recognize or estimate the various steps by which this change was brought about. The definition of Faith as an objective fact rather than a subjective condition was changing Christianity from a spiritual state into an intellectual statement. It is true that in the case of Origen his interpretation of faith is subjective rather than objective, yet it is, on the other hand, intellectual rather than personal and religious. Over against the two conceptions of objective and subjective faith, or rather side by side with the latter, another distinction was introduced or adopted by Origen, namely, that between a fleshly and a spiritual faith. This he sees set forth or, at least, suggested by St. Paul's language in 1 Cor. xii. 9. This development of the Christian truth which he thinks he sees in the words of the Apostle was manifestly suggested by the Gnostic theories and interpretations with which he was so familiar, and which exerted such an influence over some of the greatest minds in the Alexandrian Church. Even

[1] *Contra Celsus*, B. i. c. 9, 10.

recognizing to the fullest extent the high elevation to which Origen assigns faith, it is obvious that he did not attain to the same conception as St. Paul.

One or two considerations which suggest themselves will confirm this conclusion. It is true he insists upon a genuine Christian life as the only evidence of faith, but he also thinks the controlling force in human life is the reason and not the will, and so the religious life is the result of an intellectual apprehension rather than a moral inclination and a spiritual consecration. This in itself would show the different conceptions which underlay the Christian life as he defined it to himself. We see the psychological ideas which governed his thinking on the subject of the Christian life, and here at least these ideas were of importance and had a determining influence.

In his idea of forgiveness we see that the theories which were working so disastrously upon the thought and life of the Church did not leave him untouched, or perhaps it might be better to say that oftentimes he himself did not see clearly enough to understand the full significance of his own language. At times he appears to think that sins committed after baptism can be wiped out by some other means than the Divine Forgiveness. In one place he enumerates seven different ways in which this can be accomplished :—(1) by Baptism ; (2) by Martyrdom ; (3) by Almsgiving ; (4) by the Forgiveness of the Transgressions of a Friend ; (5) by the Conversion of a Sinner ; (6) by the Abundantia

Charitatis; (7) by Repentance or Penance.[1] And yet his own idea of baptism was so entirely different from the material and magical theory which was becoming prevalent, that one cannot see any necessary relation between forgiveness and baptism as he appears to have understood them. Contrary to the prevailing view, he asserts at times a forgiveness of sins after baptism, and apparently freely and independently on the part of God.[2] But forgiveness as the appreciation and appropriation of the tender love of God through faith in Jesus Christ is not recognized on this spiritual side. The life in the soul of the Son of God, which to the Apostle was the highest definition or expression of faith, and its immediate and vital relation to forgiveness, is not set forth by Origen as his interpretation of the deepest facts of man's Christian consciousness. Redemption was not the higher life of the soul in Christ, but rather the restoration of the man to his original condition before he had sinned. This conception had its origin in theological speculation rather than in Christian experience.

Again, the attitude which Origen assumed towards the historical facts of the Gospel shows the predominance of the intellectual and speculative tendencies rather than of the spiritual and religious. He is not averse to allegorizing many of the minor events of the Gospel narrative, and he does not emphasize or even seem to fully realize the signifi-

[1] Rothe, *Vorlesungen ü. Kirchengeschichte*, B. i. S. 440.

[2] Redepenning, *Origines*, B. ii. S. 411, 415.

cance of the person of Christ. The reality of Christ's Incarnation as an historic fact, while never slighted, yields in importance to the idealizing tendency which sees in this fact only a point of manifestation of the Universal Logos. History is obscure, imperfect, unsatisfactory. The historical Gospel was of less importance than the knowledge of the Eternal Logos freed from all the imperfections and limitations of the historical Revelation. The earthly life of the Redeemer was merely a symbol to lead man away from the present and visible up to the Eternal and Unseen. To Origen the Logos was the one important thought, and the historical element in the life of Christ was but the drapery which surrounded the inner essence and, to an extent at least, concealed from the ignorant and unappreciative the higher and more esoteric truths, the most important of which is the Logos. While one cannot assert the same Docetic modes of thought in Origen as in Clement, and while the former regarded Christ as his Lord and Saviour, He is not to Origen what He was to St. Paul, and the personal and spiritual relation is less in the foreground and less completely fills the horizon.

As Origen did not recognize St. Paul's idea of the law and its abrogation ; as, moreover, he did not rise to his supreme conception of faith as the source and centre of the soul's life, no more did he recognize the organic relation between faith and that sonship which is its issue and expression. It was not union with God through fellowship with

Christ which was the realization of the filial relation and after which he strove, but a certain spiritual identification with the Divine Nature by which man attains to a new being.[1] The perfect Christian was one who was free from all earthly desire, and, through devotion to a rigid asceticism, was able to pass beyond all the demands of the Christian law. Among other characteristics of this perfect or Gnostic Christian was a state of vision which was the result of the immediate union of the Gnostic with the Logos, and which was impossible to the lower and common type of Christian. In this we have a touch of Neoplatonism. The Christian character which was the ideal of St. Paul, and which was the spontaneous issue of the vital union of the soul with Christ, and which was the ultimate fact and living hope of the great Apostle's life, is here subordinated to speculative knowledge and mystical aspirations as the means of attaining the highest end of Christian living.

Yet so sure and high was the soul of this great teacher, and so wide and deep his own experience, that the practical value of a life like that of Christ was to him everything. And it was through the following of Christ that he, in fact, thought we became sons of God. His own life was filled with bitter experiences of human ignorance and human meanness. Few have ever been loved as he was loved, and few have ever been hated as he was hated. Long struggles and arduous labours filled

[1] Rothe, *Vorlesungen*, B. i. S. 431.

all his days. Driven by ecclesiastical bigotry and jealousy to end his life in a foreign land, we yet see the one abiding and passionate desire of all his life becoming more and more the strength and joy of his every act. The new note of a higher freedom and a nobler spirituality which we find in the Alexandrians was in the case of Origen accompanied by a simplicity and reality of his Christian life, which make one feel that so far as life and thought are concerned, in Origen, we have reached, if not the supreme ideal, at least the high water-mark, of the Ancient Church.

CHAPTER V

TERTULLIAN AND THE FOUNDATION OF LATIN CHRISTIANITY

In passing from Alexandria to North Africa the change is greater than almost any other which presents itself in the period with which we are dealing. Alexandria was Eastern and Greek in its culture. All its traditions, language, and literature were Greek or at least Oriental. With Carthage and North Africa the situation was entirely different. The Roman instinct and the Latin spirit here reigned supreme, and found an intensity of expression more concentrated and passionate than in Rome itself. The wide surging currents of the great cosmopolitan life of the Empire, which swept through the Imperial city, scarcely touched these shores. Greek was little understood outside the educated classes, if at all; and the contact with the Church of the East was so slight, that the greatest Father of the Latin Church, Augustine, had little, if any, knowledge of his great predecessor in the Church of Alexandria, Origen. Syria was the

cradle of Christianity, but, as the great historian of Rome has said, "In the development of Christianity Africa plays the very first part: if it arose in Syria, it was in Africa that it became the religion of the world."[1] It is not possible to have any conception of Latin Christianity at all accurate, unless one is able to see what is meant by the Roman spirit, and to see it actually expressing itself, not in institutions, laws, theories, or speculations only, but in that which underlies and creates all these—in life.

In the great representatives of the Christian Church of this century we see all the forces which were stirring the Empire and the Church exerting their powerful influence. In the wide experience and practical mind of Irenæus, the conciliating Bishop, we see the expression of the growing instinct for order and institutional life, the Imperial idea of the Church, which was slowly unfolding itself. In the Alexandrians we meet the great philosophical ideas of the age at work, and finding clear and powerful expression in the shaping of Christian thought and speculation. But in the wide diversity of the Christian Church and the vast Empire through which it had extended, other and equally potent but less permanent influences were at work, affecting the life of the Church and leaving their stamp deep upon its history. In a great period of transition, the struggle between the old and the new, the progressive and the conservative forces of society often centre about the mere practical details

[1] Mommsen, *Roman Provinces*, vol. ii. p. 373.

of life, which must eventually change as the wave of history rolls on into later ages. But these very struggles often give a turn to the subsequent life and thought, which shows how passionate the emotions, and how fierce the contest was in times which are now to us so dim and remote. The last half of the second century was a crisis in the history of the Christian Church equal in importance to the great struggles of the fourth century, and for the actual form and spirit of the Church even more significant.

Much had changed since those early days when wandering disciples or travellers who had been to Jerusalem told in awe-struck tones to little groups of anxious or curious listeners in country villages, in the outskirts of the cities, in the humble cottages of the poor or the quarters of the slaves, the story of that infinite patience, that wonderful love, that awful Death. Then, too, when eyes were strained and dim with the pathos and mystery of that Figure, came words more bewildering and overwhelming, of how He had burst the bars of Death and filled with joy the broken hearts, and made of His few discouraged friends a band of heroes, who cheerfully and sweetly faced all the sorrows of life, that men might know Him and the power of His Resurrection. When these first listeners had reluctantly and silently separated, homeward they had walked under the shining Eastern stars with this strange story in their ears and stranger and more mysterious hopes in their hearts. Together they had whispered over

the wonderful tidings which were sweeping so fast from land to land in ways almost unseen as the night wind. Alone they had sat brooding in the darkness by the banks of the Nile, their dim, half-seeing eyes filled with a vision which rose far above the yellow sands of the desert which swept away into the dark infinity of the night.

The tender pathos, the wonderful mystery, the strange surprise of the early dawn of Christianity was fading away into the light of common day. The morning which had dawned so bright and strong, full of peace and joy, blazing with the revelation of God's love, had changed as the day advanced, and now a dark pall was slowly creeping over the sky. The earth was filled with the terrible strife of men, and the sky was torn with the swift-flying storms of God's judgment. The primitive and elementary forces of human nature, which had been frozen by despair or held in bondage by the iron fetters of tradition and dead religious conventions, were roused into new expression by the new movement in human history. At no time in the past were men more torn by the conflicting energies of human life, its passionate hopes, its terrible fears, its wild despairs, than in this period. To many Christians the joy and gladness of the early days had passed away for ever. A new page was turned in the history of man's life, and, as we read it, we read a story of stern repression, of fierce struggle, of deep, deep sorrow, of awful anguish, of pitiless renunciation. The first indication of a struggle

between conflicting views about the duties and responsibilities of the Christian life came from the East, from Asia Minor. This we may say was for many reasons the most natural locality from which to expect it. Here the Apostle of European Christianity had been born, and for years had carried on his missionary work. Here, too, the last of the Apostles had spent the most fruitful years of his life. Here also the Apostolic traditions were strongest and the fruits of their activity the greatest. More names of distinction are associated with the Christian Church in this part of the Empire during the early part of the second century than in any other. Antioch, the gateway of the East, in almost immediate contact with it, had sent forth Ignatius like a fiery cross to rouse the Church. Polycarp of Smyrna had sealed his faith with his blood, and from his home in the East Irenæus had carried to the far West the lessons and the devotion which he had learned on Asiatic shores. The list is too long to enumerate, but it shows how wide-spread and how active was the Christian propaganda in these mixed races which filled the cities along the Ægean and dwelt among the upper highlands of the interior.

The more extensive the Church became, the more inevitable it was that new questions touching on the actual life of the Christian communities should press upon the minds of the more earnest, because these questions were of such an immediate and practical character. What could be expected of the members of a Church which included not only rich and poor,

but also persons from every calling and trade in a busy city? Some were drawn in by the powerful influence of the eager and vivid convictions of the first members, some attracted by lower motives. Some were members by mere inheritance, and all differently situated from the few despised and forlorn members of the first obscure and unnoticed congregations. The world was all about them, pressing in on every side. What was their mission? What could be demanded of those who wished to join? Not easy questions to settle now after eighteen centuries. Far harder ones then when the way of history was all unknown and the trackless sea of the future spread itself out before them. The members of the Church in the great cities were, or at least many of them were, men of affairs. Their activity took a larger range, and to many, doubtless, it seemed as if the Church was drawing into closer and closer contact with the world. This secularizing of the Church created alarm, which was not allayed by the wider development which was keeping pace with it. Worldly culture was also entering in a greater degree into the Church. The literary methods of the schools were making themselves a place within its life. From all sides it seemed to be absorbing elements which were not only foreign but hostile to it. Philosophy, instead of simple faith and sacrifice, had become a weapon in the hands of the defenders of the Church. The use of it was necessarily confined to the few, and those who were ignorant, and could remember the days when life and

not words was the arm by which the faith had been set forth, looked with great suspicion on the change. All the old instincts, traditions, and motives of the earlier age, which had not yet died out, were roused to full vigour by the new departure which seemed at hand. There is always a latent suspicion and a slumbering hostility in the minds of ignorant and uncultivated Christians against what seems to be secular or worldly agencies.

What had these things to do with the kingdom of Christ? Could art, learning, philosophy, or science redeem a world sunk in selfishness and sin? Christ had snatched them as brands from the burning, and they, too, had lifted up their voices against the old corrupt heathenism and destroyed its power again and again, not with fine words or clever arguments, but by steadfast endurance, by perfect trust in Him. Besides, the day of the Lord was at hand. The Apocalyptic visions which expressed the most intense faith in His coming had their origin in Asia Minor. Shepherds on the lonely hills had looked up at night to see His fiery sign in the sky, and sailors by the never-silent sea had seen His sword in the lightning and heard His voice in the sound of many waters. The intense religious enthusiasm, the passionate hopes which would not be disappointed, swept before them in a storm of contempt the new adjustment, the wretched compromise, which was to bind the Church and the world in one, and destroy for ever the life of holiness which was now first finding full expression. The appalling vision

of the Church sinking down into the moral and spiritual indifference of the world about it stirred the souls of men in whom the old primitive faith and simplicity were still alive. No doubt their own fears and the traditions of the past caused an exaggeration of the significance of the change, and they were unable to see the other side of this revolution. But men of fiery faith and a martyr's courage seldom take a wide, dispassionate, or just view of any great crisis. That there were sufficient grounds for their anxiety can hardly be disputed. Years count for a great deal when things were moving as fast as they were in the second century, and it is not fair to attribute a condition of things which is found at the end of this period also to the middle. But Tertullian tells us that in his day makers of idols had been chosen officers of the Christian Church, and that astrologers continued to carry on their business after they had been admitted to the Church.[1] Both Tertullian and Hippolytus charge the Church of Rome with the grossest indifference to all moral demands and a pronounced secularizing of the Church in the interest of the clergy. Hippolytus, a bitter enemy of Calixtus, yet an honest man and his contemporary, declares that the Bishop asserted that a bishop could not be removed or deposed from his office even for the commission of a deadly sin. When we consider what this means, we may well ask ourselves what grounds could be urged for a deposition. It is true this is in the third century,

[1] *De Idol*, 7, 9.

but that this change was neither sudden nor unnoticed we have clear indications in the writing called the *Shepherd of Hermas*, which was probably written in Rome before the middle of the second century. Here is a strong protest again the worldliness of the Church, and a clear sign that the spirit was rising.

It was in Asia Minor that this protest first found full expression, and led to an outburst of feeling which spread thence to all parts of the Empire. There was, as always, mingled with the more serious elements a huge mass of very questionable ones, which it is not easy now in every instance to detect. Montanus, a man of whom we know little, appeared in the small town of Ardaban in Phrygia and started the conflagration. The spark with which he kindled the fire was his prophecies of the 'Spirit.' With him were two women, Maximilla and Prisca or Priscilla. The date is uncertain, but it is generally assumed by the most competent critics to be about 150–160 A.D. For a time the movement seemed to be a purely local one, but the course of events favoured its spread. It owed its origin doubtless, in part at least, to the temperament of the people among whom it first sprang up. It was also assisted by certain Apostolic language which was interpreted in its interest, and was also immensely strengthened by the course of the world's history.

On all sides great and malign events were taking place. Earthquakes visited various portions of the East all through this century. In the year 166 A.D.

a great plague spread over the Empire, having been introduced from the East by the army of Verus. Famine followed plague in many places, and the year was well described as 'Annus Calamitosus.' All these events tended to work upon the religious feelings of the more intense and sombre, and a state almost of frenzy took possession of many. The persecutions under Marcus Aurelius unquestionably added fuel to the flame. The battle fever still lived in the blood of the older generation, and wherever a blow was struck it rang like a call to arms, and many flung themselves into the conflict, hating like soldiers to die in their beds. There were to be no more compromises, no more yielding to the soft allurements of the world, but a stern and bitter struggle for a nobler and loftier life, and the battle must be won at whatever cost of suffering and blood. The world without seemed but a dramatic expression of their own inward experiences. War, war, never ending and bitter as death, was what many had found in the new faith, and the fierce struggles with their own passions made them despise and rejoice in those outer struggles which seemed but a shadow of their inner life.

The day of the Lord also was at hand. This had been the universal faith of the first Christians. Wherever the earlier spirit survived, this hope also lived. The kingdoms of the world represented only that which should perish and pass away. The more terrible the blows which the world aimed at the followers of Christ, the fiercer their contempt the

more reckless their challenge, and the greater their joy in the battle. Not all, it is true, were of this stern and passionate spirit; but all everywhere who were hoping for better things, and found their highest joy in the near coming of the Lord, dared everything. His coming was their dream day and night, and in the thought of it the shame of self-indulgence and weakness burned like a flame. Exhortation, appeal, and protest against all contact with the world, against all lowering of the Christian standard, against all compromises with the spiritual stringency of the soul's high destiny, were scattered like sparks over a dry prairie, and soon the whole Church was in flames. The very character of the movement shows that it must appeal to the very best element in the Church. This new voice found an echo in many breasts, and these were the most earnest, devoted, and self-sacrificing. The message was so clear, so simple, and yet so appalling. The end of the world was near. The earth was vile and the Church was becoming corrupt. The first proposition was the common faith of by far the larger part of the Church. The second has been the common form of expression for all souls wrought upon by the passion for spiritual perfection. The last assertion, which was the conviction of many serious and earnest men, was not the mere exaggeration of fanatics. If one takes the trouble to study the legislation of the early synods, he will discover what men found in the life of the Church of this century. To tell what they found is not

necessary, and perhaps it would not seem to some to justify Montanism, but it would at least explain it. The sympathy with the essential elements of Montanism was so great and so wide-spread, that it is not possible to draw hard and fast lines as to its extent and influence. In its simpler forms there is something very appealing if not intellectually convincing. A devout historian of our own century has said of it that "There is a peculiar freshness about the Montanistic piety, and something of the colour of the original Apostolic Christianity, which attracts us."[1] How much there was in it to appeal to the nobler and loftier side of life we see in the way the story of Perpetua and Felicitas still stirs the soul with dreams of heroism.

Another element in the development of Montanism needs to be emphasized, and that was a literary influence and the Scriptural ground to which it appealed. It is a profound saying of Goethe that "Nature reveals herself in monstrosities." History also shows the presence of some particular influence or force, not in a natural or normal fashion, but in some exaggeration, which reveals how profoundly men were moved by it, and how helpless they are when the appeal touches some deep emotional conviction. The Gospel of St. John and the Apocalypse were the two books to which the Montanists appealed and upon which they rested their claims. In the one they found their authority for the inspiration which they claimed as the dis-

[1] Rothe, *Vor. über Kirch.*, B. i. S. 166.

tinguishing phenomenon of the movement, and in the strange language of the Book of Revelation that vindication which they needed for their overstrained and highly excited imaginations. The apparent harmony between their own feelings and the language of the Apostolic literature to which they appealed, gave, no doubt, an increase of conviction and a more positive and vigorous character to their language. Yet how differently are they now understood! A recent critic, in commenting upon this fact, has well said, "Montanism shows us the first, and in the second century the only, impression which the Gospel of John has made upon the heathen Christians. But what an impression! The only parallel to it is Marcion's interpretation of Paulinism in the same period."[1] The few facts which remain to us of the external history of the movement only go to sustain what the fragments of the teaching would suggest as to its spirit and character. Of Montanus himself we know but little, and that little by no means explains the influence of the movement with which his name was associated. There was in his teaching and in that of his followers nothing original or speculative as in that of the Gnostics. In fact, the Montanists were the bitter enemies of all forms of Gnosticism, as representing that intellectualism which was in their eyes the chief enemy of the Supernatural. They claimed to be orthodox, and in this period were so for the most part. Irenæus, as a firm believer in the Chiliastic views which were so wide-spread, was

[1] Harnack, *Dogmen.*, B. i. S. 325.

in sympathy with them, at least to the extent that he opposed efforts which were made for their suppression. The Roman Bishop at the same time showed no antagonism to them. When the movement reached North Africa, the most distinguished theologian which the Western Church had up to this time produced became a Montanist, and was held in great repute by the most orthodox.

This new phase in the Church's history has been regarded by some scholars as a reaction pure and simple; by others as an advance upon the existing stage of the historic development. Looked at from all sides, it is easy to see how in some respects it is the one and in some the other. A more detailed examination of its chief features will make this clearly appreciated. The main points of the movement, for they can hardly be said to form a system, were:—(1) the Order of Prophets; (2) the strong Chiliasm; (3) the Moral Reformation which it endeavoured to establish.

The ground upon which the prophetic claims were based was found in the Gospel of St. John. It was asserted that the Paraclete which our Lord had promised in that Gospel had now come. The old order of things was to pass away, and a new one under the direct guidance of the Spirit was to take its place. The very fact that certain individuals were under the direct and immediate inspiration of God—were in fact, in a sense which they asserted but did not define, a new incarnation of God—made the past order of Christian thought and life at once

obsolete. As the Revelation of Christ had superseded the Old Dispensation, so the Christian history was to be supplemented by new Revelations. This new stage of history was to be under the immediate direction of the Paraclete through the Prophets until the coming of Christ. In order to justify the prophetic claim, they appealed to the fact that prophecy had never departed from the Church. Apostolic and post-Apostolic writers had recognized the existence of prophecy in the Church, and a long list could be furnished of those who had possessed this gift, even down to that age. This appeal to the past, and the continuity of prophetic powers, represents certainly a reactionary tendency. It is the endeavour to establish anew a view of certain phases of the Christian life, which was swiftly passing away, if it had not already disappeared. From another point of view, that of organization, it was a protest against the growing hierarchical assumptions of the Episcopate in the interests of the ancient congregational life of the Church.[1] The Montanist asserted that the Prophet, inasmuch as prophecy had been continuous in the Church, was the true successor of the Apostles, and strove by this guidance to lead the Church back to its more spiritual and primitive life. Montanism did not reject the Episcopate, but wished to retain it in entirely different relations with the Church than those which it was beginning to assume. The evidence that there was much sympathy with the

[1] Bonwetch, *Geschichte d. Montanismus*, S. 117.

movement in spite of this apparent antagonism to the Episcopate, is shown in the fact that some of the bishops themselves with entire congregations joined the ranks of the new movement. On this side one can see only conservative and reactionary tendencies at work, but even this phase has been sometimes differently interpreted. These very facts are claimed as indications of a progressive and radical spirit, inasmuch as by asserting the claim of a new element in the life of the Church—that is, the immediate inspiration of the Paraclete—Montanism was introducing a principle of indefinite advance and development in opposition to the mechanical and statutory principle of mere tradition and rigid orthodoxy. This progressive aspect is more apparent than real. For, in the first place, the New Prophecy was to do away with all personal intellectual activity. All that it permitted was that the waiting soul was to listen for the divine message. The individual was deprived of all initiative, and the supremacy of the Prophet was asserted over the whole spiritual life. The protest which was made in the interests of the people against hierarchical encroachments ended in establishing a prophetic hierarchy more exclusive and arbitrary than the one against which the protest was made. Thus, while in theory it might seem to be progressive, in fact it was destructive of all spiritual advance.

In the field of doctrine, while expressly disclaiming any intention of departing from the established

doctrinal position of the Church, yet from the very fact that the revelation of the Paraclete through the Prophets was made the cardinal doctrine of the movement, a new order of relations was intimated than that upon which the Church stood, and a subordination different from that set forth in the New Testament or in the doctrinal teaching of the Church was made prominent. The revelation of the Father through the Son thus inevitably became of less importance than the revelation of the Spirit. This point of contrast or opposition, however, from the undeveloped condition of theological thought proper, does not, so far as the present writer's knowledge extends, seem to have been in the least emphasized or even set forth.

The Chiliasm, on the other hand, which was one of the distinguishing elements in Montanism, was in no way a distinct departure from the general sentiment of the Church, nor did it rest for its strength upon any purely local feeling. No one thought seems to have been more widely diffused throughout the Church both East and West than this vivid expectation of the Lord's coming. No one particular class was affected by it. Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and later Cyprian in the West were influenced by it, as well as the more ignorant and excitable members of the Church in Phrygia. It is true that Montanism organized this sentiment and gave it greater prominence and clearer expression, but the fountains of this feeling lay deep down in the primitive Christian expectation. The end

of the world was at hand, and the faithful were bidden flee from the wrath to come. The new Jerusalem was to descend out of Heaven, and the capitol of the Messianic Kingdom was to be fixed at Pepuza in Phrygia. Every effort was made to give emphasis and distinctness to this hope. At the great Montanistic feast, maidens bearing lamps walked in procession, evidently intended to represent the virgins of our Lord's parable, and setting forth thus the expectation of the Parousia.[1] These features, however, were merely the external and accidental expression of the essential life of the movement. Its real power lay in something deeper than these trappings. The vital element in it lay not so much in its claim to prophecy or its Chiliastic enthusiasm, as in its moral protest, in its effort at reform in the field of the practical Christian life. It is this side of the movement which must be regarded as of chief importance, for it was from this side that its influence passed over into and directly affected the Church, and it was this aspect of it which roused the enthusiasm of many who would naturally feel some reluctance in departing from existing customs and traditions.

One of those profound yet subtle changes which mean so much was coming over the Church, and men felt it rather than saw it or understood it. The Church was slowly turning its eyes from the past to the future. For the Church, with the loss of its primitive character and with its greater

[1] Bonwetch, S. 76.

extension, had also lost much of its earlier feeling towards the world. Its gradual development into a powerful organization led unconsciously to a new view of its history. It did not intend to reject the past, but it felt the impulse for the future stirring its young blood. It was now in much closer contact with society than ever before, and was instinctively looking towards the recognition of the State and a long and intimate alliance with it which was ultimately to come. There was no conscious and deliberate compromise or accommodation on the part of the Church, but an unconscious interpretation and adaptation of the Gospel to the new situation, brought about by the influence of long-established customs and ideas, of hereditary instincts, and of subtle but most powerful tendencies, deeply planted in human nature and strengthened by centuries of recognition. The great forces of this massive civilization of the Empire surrounded the Church the moment it emerged from its seclusion, and the instinct for conquest, which is of the very essence of its life, led it, with its growing life, to think differently of its destiny, especially as its earlier consciousness was so profoundly modified by the new situation. That such a change as this was actually taking place seems to be contradicted by the most important literature of this period. The hostility of the Empire is more savage and systematic than before. The hatred of the Church for the order of life around it seems to be asserted in all its great writers. Yet, running through all

this literature is the evidence, contained in the very protests themselves, that men needed warnings and exhortations which they had not needed before. A most resolute attempt was made to check the drift of the general life of the Church, and the more sober and earnest had their fears aroused, their conservative feelings excited, by the closer contact with society which was manifest in the moral deterioration which was visible to all. A process of readjustment or rearrangement of the spiritual forces seemed to be required to meet the new situation. The issue which was forced upon the Church called forth two efforts to meet it—the one conscious and deliberate, the other indirect and perhaps unconscious, but which operated in a way that was of far greater significance to the future than the other. As the inner spirituality decayed, and the moral integrity became less and less distinctive, the consciousness of unity and solidarity became more and more obscured. Then was heard the clash of warring factions, bent upon establishing certain speculative systems which would be a substitute for the harmonious and powerful expression of the Christian life which was the strength and life of the Church in the beginning. To meet this internal deterioration and quicken the fundamental consciousness of Christian brotherhood, an external expression of the unity so tenaciously insisted upon and so instinctively demanded was set forth. The organization as an expression of this unity became of more and more importance, as

the inner ground of it became less and less the personal consciousness of each individual Christian. The unity which was thus imperilled by the lack of spiritual foundation was thus based upon organization and historical tradition. The wide diversity in character and morals of the members of the Church made the old demand for personal holiness as the key to the Church's existence no longer possible if the Church was to maintain its relations with the world. As a consequence, the attribute of holiness was transferred from the members to the organization, from the individual to the Church. Against this change, which opened up so entirely different prospects, the older traditions and inherited moral attitude and standards made a most powerful protest. From this side of the situation Montanism is the expression of the unwillingness to see the individual lost in the merely external organization of the religious consciousness. Moreover, in the passing of the years and the extension of the Church, together with this new view of its relation to the members, the emphasis had been shifted from one side of life to the other.

The Church insisted that the predicate of holiness, or at least the root of it, lay in purity of doctrine. It asserted, moreover, that the individual who was in union with that body, which was the appointed guardian of the truth, was, by virtue of this union and the consequent acceptance of the doctrine, guaranteed salvation. The Montanists, on the other hand, show the survival of the ancient spirit, in that

they claimed that the true holiness of the Church consisted in the moral and spiritual perfection of its members. The intense energy with which they asserted this was a strong appeal to all who were in earnest about life. The Montanist protested against a conception of holiness which identified it with an office, an organization, or a theory, and insisted that it must be manifest in the individual or it had no actual existence in human life. In other words, that it is in life, not dogma, that the truth is revealed. This, no doubt, was set forth with considerable confusion, but the spiritual instinct was right when it rebelled against a mere official Christianity which justified or, at least, condoned a moral leniency, if not laxity, which had its origin not in the immense pity and forgiveness of God, but in a theory which was absolutely external to the inner life of the soul. It was this instinct which lay behind the assertion of Montanism of the priesthood of all believers over against the growing sacerdotalism and the limitation of the spiritual inheritance of believers. But this very protest was to a degree confused and ineffective, owing to the presence of certain influences in the life of the age, and also to the lack of real spiritual insight and Christian sensitiveness. The holiness which the Montanist insisted upon so passionately was not to be found in inward character but in specific acts. Holiness was identified with the prevailing moral conception of life, and that was ascetic. Asceticism may be the result, and often is, of a serious religious

disposition, but it never can be the cause of it. This identification of holiness with asceticism, which is one of the notes of the age, issued from a spiritual confusion, which shows the presence of other and alien elements than those which sprang from the pure influence of Christ. The motive of Montanism was undoubtedly pure, and no doubt also there was need of a restoring influence; but the form and the ideal which ruled this reaction were not drawn from Apostolic fountains, but from the reactionary tendencies of human nature and from the austere and legal ideal of the prevailing Stoic morality. As a result the emphasis was again shifted, and it was not inward and spiritual purity, but outward and physical purity, which was set forth as the ideal. That this was the case can be readily seen when the means which were used to produce and regulate it are considered. By no possible stretch of the imagination can one conceive of the holiness of Christ as a result of legislative enactment of any character whatever. It must issue from the inner consecration and fellowship of the soul with God. But external legislation was a demand which was in the air, showing the failure of a true knowledge of the springs of the Christian life, or at least a confusion on a matter about which all confusion means disaster to the highest interests of the soul and of mankind.

The sympathy which the Montanistic protest aroused shows how deep the sources of it were in the better life of the Church. It was an honest

endeavour to lead the blind and groping ambitions of the Church into the path they were seeking, for the highest needs and instincts of an age do not always, and sometimes never, find clear and conscious expression. Oftentimes they lead to confusion, permanent or temporary; and it is only long after that they are clearly understood. This age was striving after a definite ideal, and while we may recognize the fact that it was not the highest expression of the Christian consciousness, yet the strength of Montanism lay in the fact that it was bold and resolute enough to completely grasp, appreciate, and sympathize with this endeavour, and laid down the broad and general demand that every Christian should aim at becoming that which was so much admired in the individual saints.[1] In Montanism we have the paradox of an old and true instinct moving along a new path, and expressing itself in a manner which was the direct opposite in almost every respect of its original form. The beginnings of the Christian consciousness lay in the new sense of freedom and redemption through Christ. The stern Puritanism of Montanism legislated this freedom and the springs whence it issued out of existence. It claimed to be a protest against the merely ecclesiastical and statutory Christianity which permitted such great moral laxity, and insisted that the remedy was a more complete development of the prevailing ideal. This ideal in its largest theoretical aspect, as has been seen,

[1] Belck, *Geschichte*, S. 25.

was legal. Christianity had been recognized as the 'Nova Lex,' and this conception was gradually evolving its large application to the whole domain of life. As yet it had been applied only to the doctrinal statements and the undeveloped but expanding organization of the Church. The vast field of life and conduct was still untouched by a systematic and authorized expression of the legal idea. There was no law in the statutory sense here, and the Scriptures were used to support both a lax and a severe conception of the Christian life. But the tide was running swift and strong, and swept on over the whole territory of man's life. We recognize at once that in relation to the Gospel the legal conception is a secular idea. It has its origin elsewhere than in the Christian consciousness. In its various manifestations and expressions it must necessarily embody itself in forms which are essentially secular. The curious inconsistency of Montanism, which was in intention a protest against the secular spirit, is, that while protesting most vigorously against the secular tendencies of the Church, the Montanistic Prophets proceeded to extend the secular ideal, which had shaped the growing life of the Church so decisively, to the larger field of life and conduct, and determined to give a statutory expression to that which from the very nature of the case must ever be determined by the spirit within.[1] That Montanism was on this side only an extension and a confirmation of the

[1] Harnack, *Dogmen.*, B. i. S. 325.

prevailing moral ideal and a codification so to speak, and a legalizing of the more ascetic tendencies of the period, can be readily seen, not only in the forms of life which it insisted upon, but in the immense impulse which it gave to this conception of Christianity. It was in this aspect, at least, only an acceleration of the legal development which was taking place. The three particulars in which it emphasized its protest against what it considered the worldly laxity of the Church, and yet shows its entire correspondence with the real spiritual temper which formed the more vital and intense life of the Church, are: — (1) Fasts; (2) Marriage; (3) Martyrdom.

1. The value of Fasting was universally accepted in the Church at this time, but there was no law on the subject, and the fasts rested for their authority simply upon the traditions of the Church. This sentiment and custom were hardened into a law of universal obligation. The spirit in which the fasts were to be regarded was entirely altered, and what had been largely a matter of choice and custom was raised to a legal requirement. The divine authority which authenticated this new law was found in the Paraclete, which spoke through the Prophets.

2. The subject of Marriage likewise received a new treatment. The general sentiment in regard to marriage was, except in the case of a few noble exceptions, tainted with a feeling of reluctance and suspicion. Virginity was regarded as a higher state,

and this latent discrimination against the divine order had its source not in any Christian truth, but in the prevalent asceticism and in the value which abstinence and self-restraint, even when they are injurious, almost always possess. The manifestation of this self-deprivation has always excited the admiration of men, especially in an age of general self-indulgence; and it is an easy step to assume that the virtue which resides in the act of will belongs also to the special act in which this disposition expresses itself. The Montanists were either unable or unwilling to deny entirely the validity of marriage in itself, but they so interpreted the permission, that no second marriage could be looked upon with anything but abhorrence. While not always disposed, in the case of the first marriage, to assert that it was a weak concession to the flesh, they had no hesitation in asserting this of the second, and fiercely reprobated any disposition of the kind. This attitude met with general approval, and in their determination to raise the standard of Christian morality they forced the question to a legal enactment, and permitted only one marriage to a member, no matter what the circumstances were; and even this was regarded as a relaxation of the highest demands.

3. As to the question of Martyrdom, this also was regarded by them as self-evident. No Christian could under any circumstances prefer his life to the opportunity to witness his faith before the world even unto death. No compromise, no hesitation, no considerations of prudence or the welfare of

others, released him from the obligation to meet the issue whenever presented. To these stern soldiers there had been enough shifting and trimming. No evasions were to be any longer permitted. The Church had lost its heroic spirit, and it needed again to be fired with the old fearless courage of the past which had won such victories against the world. This very demand, however, created a false enthusiasm and paved the way to most unhealthy exaggerations. The martyrs became the Christian heroes, and the heart which did not flinch at the sight of the lions was filled oftentimes with the unhealthy fumes of popular admiration. Few have been more arrogant than the saints and martyrs who have become public property and live ever with the voices of the world, whether they be religious or secular, in their ears. What could, if genuine, only spring out of the inspiration of the soul was made a matter of legislation, and courage and consecration were authorized by act of law.

In other and related matters the attitude of the Montanistic party was no less exaggerated, intolerant, and false. It rejected a second repentance in the case of a fall, and left the soul outside the communion of the Church and apart from human fellowship and sympathy, and refused it the sure consolation of God's infinite pity. From every one alike, weak and strong, young and old, wise and ignorant, struggling and sure, Montanism demanded a stern inflexible morality which was in no ways the natural expression of a soul filled with the perfection of Christ, but a purely

external life which revealed only the intensity of the reaction against the deterioration which was sapping the simplicity and beauty of the Christian character. In their anxiety about the purity of the Church the Montanists opposed the baptism of children, for the magical view of baptism which was establishing itself made forgiveness of mortal sins, at least after baptism, impossible. In this respect the Montanists took a much narrower view than the Church ultimately adopted. With them the sacramental system was not very far extended, and the sacramental idea exhausted itself in baptism. The Church, on the other hand, from the necessity of its position, and by a natural law of development, gradually extended the sacramental idea beyond baptism, and created various channels through which the sacramental functions of the Church could find and repair the spiritual injuries of the members of its fold. Ultimately the sacramental efficacy of the Church extended itself over the whole life of man from the beginning to the end, and the holiness which it was able to impart, and which it dispensed through its various agencies, was able to anticipate every moral and spiritual necessity.[1]

Thus Montanism, while it claimed to be a protest in the interests of a more serious and more spiritual life, in reality gave a legal value to every act, and the most insignificant detail of conduct was fixed by the decision of the Prophets. Nothing was or could be indifferent, and nothing was left to the individual

[1] Ritschl, *Entstehung*, S. 335.

conscience. An iron law reached wide and deep over the entire contents of life, and all personal initiative was destroyed. It was an outburst of pietism which stirred the Church to its depths, but it ended in a harsh, unspiritual, and trivial rigorism which denuded the life of all real strength and beauty. Yet it claimed to be but an attempt to revive the past and to restore the lost Atlantis which was buried in the rolling years. As Tertullian said, "Paracletus restitutor potius quam institutor disciplinæ."[1]

The attitude of the Church towards Montanism was by no means the same in every locality; and more than that, it was only gradually that the struggle became general. The wide-spread dissatisfaction with the inner decay, the deepening chasm between the past and the present, the opposing tendencies which were manifesting themselves, led to a profound unrest. Anything which appeals to the really serious element of society exerts a greater effect than that which touches only the superficial emotions. The rise of Montanism or something analogous to it was inevitable at this crisis in the Church's history. The rapid spread and the wide territory it covered shows it was no merely local phenomenon. It swept like a wave of fire from the mountains of Phrygia to the far-off plains of North Africa, and everywhere seems to have sent a thrill through the hearts of the most eager and lofty. Stripped of all the merely super-

[1] *De Monog.*, 4.

ficial characteristics, the struggle was between the old and the new, the primitive ideas and sentiments of a simple enthusiastic life and the deep instincts of a world-wide movement which was marching on to victory. The most passionate hostility was excited by the struggle in some localities, yet Montanism survived for centuries, because with all its grotesque and impossible features, which, it should be observed, play but a small part in the influence which religious feeling exerts over the mass of men, it still represented the last lingering glance backward to an age which in all its essential points was soon to be forgotten.

The triumphant Church with remorseless rigour determined to destroy all opposition whether heathen or Christian, and this latter especially when it was but the echo of a past which no man knew. Yet the intense bitterness shown towards the Montanists reveals the strength of the movement. More than two centuries after it had begun—that is, in the year 398 A.D.—an edict was issued by Arcadius and Honorius against them, ordering the destruction of all Montanistic books, and made their concealment punishable with death.[1] Yet this does not seem to have proved satisfactory, for more than an hundred years later it was thought necessary to take still more stringent measures against them, and in the year 407 A.D. they were proceeded against and their wills declared invalid, and their slaves given freedom on condition of their becoming Catholics. This was even harsher

[1] Bonwetch, *Geschichte*, S. 172.

treatment than that used to the Pagans, but a stubborn minority seldom receives justice in religious controversies. Yet still later, in 530 and 532 A.D., Justinian issued another law against them.[1] When they finally disappeared is not known, but for good and for evil their work was done long before they passed from the stage of history.

More important even than their own history is the attitude of the Church towards them, and the influence which in turn they exerted upon the Church. When the controversy assumed an acute stage, and it became necessary to define the position of the Church towards the new movement, considerable embarrassment was felt on account of the difficulty of drawing a sharp line of distinction and laying down a definite plan of attack. The claims of the Prophets were as well the weakness as the strength of Montanism. The Church could not well deny the existence of prophecy within it, as that had been the common faith from the beginning. Yet the view of prophecy which one would derive not only from the Old Testament but from the writers of the Apostolic Age, was quite different from that held by the Montanists. Unconsciously the Church had admitted or accepted without any reflection certain theories as to the nature of the prophetic state which had been set forth by Philo, and these in turn had not been drawn so much from the Hebrew prophecy as from the heathen mantic. A condition bordering upon hypnotism mingled

[1] Rothe, *Vorlesungen ü. Kirchengeschichte*, B. i. S. 181.

with intense religious excitement, which was characteristic of certain phases of heathenism which found such frequent and full expression especially in Phrygia, was now identified with Christian prophecy. The moment, however, this claim was made and the situation was fully realized, the Church was aroused, and the assumption as to the character of prophecy which had become so widespread was rejected as soon as it was seen what a strange and unknown future it opened up. This fact throws considerable light on the state of the New Testament Canon at this time. It has been strongly urged that if there had been a Canon of the New Testament with definite shape and recognized authority, it would have been impossible for Montanism to have set forth such claims as it did, or that it should have obtained such wide-spread influence. Not only did the Church reject the Montanistic prophecy on the ground of its heathen character, but the necessity of finding a counterweight to this position gave a great impulse to the canonical development. The Apostolic writings gained new power as against Montanistic prophecy. The more passionately the Montanists insisted upon their prophecy and the consequent extension of the sacred literature of Christianity, the more vehemently the Church insisted upon the definition and limitation of the authoritative writings.

In the field of organization also the development was accelerated and the Church took a more positive and dogmatic position. As the Prophets

of the Old Dispensation stood in opposition to the Law, so the Montanists asserted did their Prophets stand over against and above the New Law, the Gospel, and the organization which had now become associated with it. This claim that the Church was under the divine guidance of the Paraclete speaking through the Prophets was a challenge to the growing order of things. The Church rejected not only the expression but the theory upon which it was based, and yet in reality adopted the principle, and later set it forth in a new guise in the claim that the guidance of the Church was, doctrinally at least, to be found in the Episcopacy which was the organ of the Holy Spirit.

The Montanists had not departed from any of the doctrines of the Church, and had confined their claim to legislate and direct to the field of morals. The Church had been driven by the stress of the controversy with the Gnostics to make this claim for doctrinal truth, but after the force of Montanism seemed to have spent itself, we see that the Church shifted the ground somewhat, or extended it rather to include the field of morals also; but this was treated with far less stringency than by the Montanists. Against the position of the Montanist, which laid such emphasis upon individual character, the value of the organization was insisted upon, and made of much greater prominence as against the danger which threatened it. The less pressure the individual character was able to bear, the greater became the importance of the organization.

There was before the world at this period an illustration of the value of organization to maintain the coherence and order of a vast mass of the most diverse elements, which has been the marvel of mankind ever since. The Imperial system of laws, and the Imperial organization which had been built up by the genius of one people through centuries of most unflinching endeavour, was now showing its inherent power. Rulers of the most opposite character, some the very basest of mankind, had sat upon the Imperial throne, but its foundations were sunk so deep that all the depravity of its occupants could not overthrow it. The passion for organization was in the Roman blood, and this great instinct became one of the most vital forces in days of trial to shape the fortunes of the Church. To what an extent this Roman instinct worked we can see best only in the later ages, when the rivalry of the Empire had disappeared and the Church stood majestic and alone towering over the ruins of the civilization of the past and the chaos of barbarism, out of which it was to be one of the foremost agencies in bringing the new order and the lofty ideals of the times to come.[1]

[1] "Papal infallibility is but Imperial supremacy transfigured and spiritualized. The Catholic Church could not have been without Christianity, but still less could it have been without Roman Imperialism. It owes its life to the one, but its distinctive organization to the other. . . . . Apart from Rome, and Rome decadent, with the Imperial idea and organization, but without the Imperial spirit, Catholicism could never have come into being."—Fairbairn, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, pp. 107, 108.

How powerfully the disturbance which Montanism introduced worked towards a stronger and more complete organization is witnessed by the fact that the first of those gatherings, the Synods and Councils, which grew to such authority and dignity, were inspired by the desire to controvert the new Prophets.[1]

In the field of Christian morals the influence of Montanism upon the Church was very great. The Church resisted the harsh demands of that party in the interests of a larger liberty, but it was not the liberty of a large spiritual or intellectual freedom which was the characteristic of the great Alexandrian teachers, and thus an approximation at least to the Gospel liberty, but only a greater moral freedom, a larger room of conduct and action. The field of things indifferent, to which the Montanists had refused existence, was recognized, and concessions were made to the nature of man as he existed in society, which in some respects were very questionable concessions. The rigidity of Montanism was partially adopted, but it was limited in its application. The Church advanced in time the rigoristic conception of life, but it denied its universal obligation which was the very essence of Montanism. It assented to the legal theory of conduct, but resisted its extension to all the members of the Church. It drew a distinction between the clergy and laity, and made the sterner demands applicable to the former only. In so

[1] Hefele, *Hist. of Councils*, vol. i. p. 77 (Eng. Trans.).

doing the Church established a mode and standard of judgment which has remained in force ever since.

The ideal which Montanism had set up made demands which recognized no distinctions whatever, and as such, and in this sense, it was a healthier and a truer claim than the twofold piety which became prevalent through the adoption of one portion of the theory, which ultimately prevailed with such disastrous results to the integrity and genuineness of the Christian character. This brief and incomplete review of Montanism will assist, at least, in understanding some of the changes which were taking place in the Church life, and also the influence which it was calculated to exert upon a certain type of character. It is not, however, in the East but in the West that the great representative figure meets us, who has been associated in the minds of all students of church history with Montanism, and recognized as its most powerful exponent. He is the first of that line in which are included Cyprian, Lactantius, Minucius Felix, and Augustine, and is second to none save the last. These are the real founders of Latin theology, although they all belong to North Africa. In studying the character of Tertullian, we are brought in contact with one wholly unlike any that we have before met, and are face to face with the new type in its most vigorous and powerful expression. Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus was the son of a

centurion, and was born in Carthage about the year 160 A.D. according to the best calculations. At this time Carthage was, Rome excepted, perhaps the most corrupt city in the West. Here, too, was a larger measure of culture combined with luxury than in any other city of the West save Rome. He inherited the dark passionate Punic temper with the warrior soul of his martial descent. Tertullian was not of Christian parentage, and the fierce fever of his African blood swept him down into the vast whirlpool of vice in which the society of his native city was plunged. It is a far cry from the serene spirit of Clement to the sombre, violent nature of Tertullian. In him we pass from "the cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples" of Gnostic speculation and Neoplatonic dreams which haunted the minds of the Alexandrians, to the hot and passionate atmosphere in which the coarsest and grossest forms of vice obtruded themselves into the very blaze of day. Tertullian's eye was not fixed upon the abstractions of an imagination haunted by Platonic aspirations, but upon the drama—we may indeed call it the tragedy—of actual life. His difficulties and struggles are not mental but personal. He fought not with the intellectual doubts, but with the fierceness and violence of his own nature. He was educated in the way a man of Roman blood or of Roman traditions would be educated. He had no taste for philosophy, although a wide acquaintance with it and something of a hard practical contempt for

much of its ineffectiveness. He spent many years at Rome, and then returned to his native city apparently with the purpose of becoming a lawyer or advocate. Some time, we know not when, that hour came to him which the modern poet has so well described, when

> "On that hard Pagan world disgust
> And secret loathing fell.
> Deep weariness and sated lust
> Made human life a hell."

This awful secret, this mysterious experience, he never reveals to human eye. Perhaps on some dark night, with the silent stars above him, the sense of his lonely orphanage sank into his soul. He turned from that foul past with passionate repulsion, and found in Christ the hope for himself which he found nowhere else. Yet he never forgot those years that were gone, and so intensely human is he, and so swept by the fiery blast of temptation, that he never thought of that past without a shudder. He turned his eyes away with a moan from that which he loathed, and yet he always felt the power of it over his wild and stormy heart. Few men, probably, have ever lived a sadder life than he. Afflicted with that terrible imagination which brings such immeasurable pain to its possessor, he was plunged again and again into that immense ocean of pain which the dramatic instinct of the soul always realizes about it. There were brute instincts in him which would not sleep, haunting memories which filled every waking hour with the unforgotten

past. Such an one Nature has destined for many things, but not for happiness. No hours of peace came often to that soldier. He is for ever fighting with an almost awful intensity for that which he never felt he had attained. The world around him pressed in upon his inner life. All the appeals which it makes to a sensuous, passionate nature, it made to his. Like a great bell from which, though silent and motionless, every vibration in the air calls forth a responsive voice, so this strange and sensitive soul was thrilled by sights and sounds it would not know, and hated the mysterious relation which every aspect of life and all the varied emotions of the human soul were continually implying. From all these distracting influences, which seemed to pursue him everywhere, and from which he could find no escape, the dungeon of the martyr even appeared a welcome retreat. So, in writing to the martyrs, there is a tone almost of envy, and certainly of sincere bitterness, in the way in which he bids them welcome the captivity which called forth so much sympathy from others. They, at least, in the darkness and silence of their cells, could find that hour of calm in which they could turn their souls to God, for there they had escaped from the ever-present world and the voices which were for ever calling to the soul. "You," he said, "have no occasion to look on strange gods; you do not run against their images; you have no part in heathen holidays, even by mere bodily mingling in them; you are not annoyed by the foul fumes of idolatrous

solemnities; you are not pained by the atrocities or madness or immodesty of their celebrants; your eyes do not fall on stews and brothels; you are free from causes of offence, from temptations, from unholy reminiscences.[1]

His was a wild soul, which the commonplace life of men could neither satisfy nor check. The beauty of the world seemed to torment him, and his fiery African blood was heated to a fever by the common graces of life. His ardent spirit was ever in an intense glow, and however irrational, exaggerated, absurd, grotesque, and repulsive he at times may seem, there is always the sense of immense power coming forth like a manifestation of a natural force. He is always at a white heat. His sentences leap from his lips like sabre strokes. They flash and shatter like forked lightning. Fiercely, wildly, recklessly, brutally at times he strikes, without pity and without love. Yet, in spite of his ferocity, contempt, and hatred, one cannot read him without the feeling that he was struggling desperately all the time, and that these expressions are but the explosions of a nature that was volcanic in its wild energy and passion. Storm-tossed and striving as he always was, there comes a cry again and again from that much-tried soul of piercing sweetness, of infinite pathos—the lyrical cry of one to whom the best was revealed, if only in glimpses. When one thinks of that restless spirit, his pride and arrogance, there is something of plaintive beauty and tenderness in the

[1] *Ad Mar.*, c. ii.

touching words with which he begins his *Tract upon Patience*: "I fully confess unto the Lord God that it has been rash enough, if not even impudent, in me to have dared compose a treatise on Patience, for practising which I am all unfit, being a man of no goodness. . . . And so to discuss about that which it is not given one to enjoy, will be, as it were, a solace; after the manner of invalids who, since they are without health, know not how to be silent about its blessings. So I, most miserable, ever sick with the heats of impatience, must of necessity sigh after, and invoke, and persistently plead for, that health of Patience which I possess not. . . . Perish the whole world if I might gain Patience!"

It was the intense and dramatic reality of his life to him which is the striking thing about him. He felt that the task of the Gospel was to deal with the actual life of man and not solve the problems of the philosopher. This was what made it of supreme importance in his eyes. He deliberately and wilfully, and, one may add, with a brutal disregard of the whole intellectual side of life, flung himself into the struggle to find a standing ground where the soul could find not only peace, but what to him was of far greater importance, strength and purity. For him a new world order had begun in the Gospel. He flung the door shut against the past, fiercely and disdainfully. The star of Christ was shining in the sky above him—the star of peace; but for such as he that peace does not come until after the long warfare is ended in the eternal silence. The whole man is

pictured in his works. They are, as has been said, not classical even in form, and are filled with the modern spirit. They are subjective to a degree no classic writer would admit.[1] The style is characteristic of the thought. It is lurid and vehement, full of gloom and fire, burning like a smoking torch. His education had been careful and extensive; and this, joined with the vigour of his own intellectual nature, made him master of all the resources of the past which he seems to so despise. He is always at war with the established order, and all his writings are the battles he wages against what he considers the foes of the higher life. Yet his method is that of an advocate. He is again and again disingenuous, sophistical, and unconvincing. Full of hatred and scorn, he overwhelms his adversaries with a perfect storm of fire. The immense vitality of the man is the most amazing thing about him, and like a stormy sea the wild waves send back every flash of lightning from their pallid crests.

To such a nature as this Montanism would be an almost irresistible attraction. It set forth that view of the religious life which was alone tolerable to him—that is, an absolute sincerity, a scornful contempt of the mere things of life, and the daring ambition to reach an absolute standard. At what period of his life he became a Montanist is not known, but his instincts and sympathies led him by an inevitable gravitation into their ranks. The chief points of Montanism appealed to him most

[1] *Hauck*, S. 409.

profoundly. His deep faith in spiritual realities led him to insist most earnestly upon the veracity of those prophecies which claimed to be but a continuation of the manifestation of that Spirit which he believed had always guided the Church. The peculiar form which these prophecies took did not of necessity preclude their being reliable and authentic messages from God. The dogmatic prejudices which worked so strongly against them in others did not affect him, because the ecclesiastical influences which exerted such an overwhelming force in their rejection took but a very slight hold, if any, upon his mind. It was simply as the continuous spiritual manifestation that these prophecies appealed to him, and the point of view from which they wrought upon him — that is, their moral stringency and ethical demands—overweighed all the merely superficial characteristics which were used as grounds for their repudiation.

The other elements of Montanism were those upon which the real emphasis was laid, and in these Tertullian found a solid ground for the veracity of the movement. It seemed to make for a higher, stronger life. It was also firm against the growing laxity which filled him with scorn and anger. Christianity was to him essentially a life and not a theory, and while Montanism might be, and was, untrue to the higher Christian ideal, it was at least real and genuine in its demands, and could not be charged with paltering with the highest interests of life and morality. The Puritanical force which

was of its essence has always appealed to the highest instinct for conduct, and Tertullian was neither the first, last, nor the best man who has felt the strength of this motive.

The Chiliasm, to which Montanism gave such a complete expression, found in Tertullian one who responded to it without a question. The belief in the end of the world and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, visible to all men, was not a dogmatic inference which he drew from Scriptures or from a misunderstanding of the past order of history, but had its roots in a deep emotional conviction of his own which, in turn, sprang from his actual experience of life and society. The awful drama of life unrolled its dark pages before his sombre imagination. His mind was haunted by the hopeless infamy of society. The facts, as he saw them in their hideous reality, forbade any gleam of hope. The whole world was mysterious, with its unseen and unknown burden of anguish and woe. His own soul was quivering with a nameless fear. It was to him not only intolerable but impossible that God should not sweep all this unspeakable vileness into the pit. As to Tertullian, so it has been to others. The more one sees of human sin, the more difficult the problem becomes.

The prospect for the future of the world looked so ominous in his eyes, that he took refuge in the belief in the new kingdom not only with resignation but with hope. The Empire was the natural enemy of the Gospel, and the order of the world was too

strong in its iniquity for the Church, unless God should destroy it and build anew the walls of Jerusalem. The reasons which he had for feeling as he did were sown broadcast before his eyes. The old simplicity which Clement admires and advocates so strongly among Christians seemed to Tertullian about to disappear. The luxury of the age was excessive, and no place was more given to its full display than Carthage. The influence of the theatre and the arena was very great and very debasing. This testimony comes from all the writers of the period, both Heathen and Christian. The general laxity of life and the love of display were extending themselves to the members of the Christian Church, and Tertullian complains that there seemed to be no real distinction either in dress or manners between Christian and Heathen women. This fact, however distorted or exaggerated by his feverish ambition for a high and stern morality, shows that the old self-restraint was giving away, and a deterioration had set in whose end was not in sight.

The striking differences between the Eastern and Western characters come to light in no way more clearly than in the subjects which engross their thought, and also in their method of treatment. The East was subtle, speculative, transcendental throughout. The metaphysical facts were the ones it was in search of, so that it might place the individual in a correct theoretical relation to the original reason which was behind and beneath all

the phenomena of life. The West, on the other hand, had none of this profound intellectual eagerness, and was weighed down by the burden of life. The Divine Nature was the point of concentration for human thought in the East. The Western mind bent over the problem of human nature, and as the ugly facts stared it in the face, a sense of hopelessness swept over the soul, of which we find little in the East. This difference, however, is not primarily due to a larger optimism begotten of deeper faith, but rather that the mind of the East was averted from the problems which plunged the Western mind into such distress. Perhaps it would state the case better if we said that the East looked at evil from the point of view of the Divine Existence, and the West from that of human nature and human conduct.

In no man of the Western Church do we find this intense concentration upon the actual facts of life and the constitution of human nature greater than in Tertullian. Living was to him of immensely more importance than thinking, for however close the relation between life and thought may be in each individual, yet it is oftentimes a matter of far greater difficulty for a man to control his life, including in that term, of course, the fountain and well-spring of it all, his inner nature with its ceaseless stream of emotions, appetites, ambitions, doubts, and spiritual longings, than for one who simply desires a clear and coherent intellectual conception of the order and processes of life. To be something rather

than to think something reveals the inner secret of the soul as no other experience through which man can pass possibly does. Tertullian wished with all the energy of his soul to be something for which he need not be ashamed. All things were mere instruments in his hand for this purpose. He used them as a man uses an axe, to hew his way through a forest overgrown with underbush. The inevitable renunciations which held men back, as they still do, from the higher path, he was willing to make. Not only so, but he made out of them, without reference to individual character or spiritual need, an universal demand. The ideal so developed was to a great degree negative and unprogressive. It was not a great creative force which would lift life to its highest plane, but for all best and noblest fruits was ineffective and sterile. In order more fully to understand the aim of Tertullian and also to appreciate the reasons why, in spite of one's sympathy with his sincerity and genuine strength of soul, his ideal does not seem large enough for the wider horizon of the later centuries, it is necessary to examine his interpretation of the thought of his time, and also his understanding of the ideas which were fundamental with St. Paul.

The authoritative character of those writings which are now included in the New Testament are everywhere recognized by Tertullian, although there had been no concerted action as yet placing these in a canonical class along with the Hebrew Scriptures. The anti-Gnostic writings of Tertullian show how

much this controversy had done towards fixing the attention of the Church upon the Pauline writings, but unfortunately this familiarity which is so copiously displayed does not imply any clear understanding of the largest and most fundamental ideas which ruled the Pauline conception of the Christian life.

Taking them in their order and contrasting them with the corresponding interpretation of Tertullian, we find, in spite of the latter's moral earnestness, a profound difference in the conception of Sin. There is undoubtedly a keener and more passionate sense of sin in him than in his predecessors, but whether it has its roots in a deeper Christian consciousness, or is only a matter of temperament and the reaction from a life which opened up abysses which made the moral nature recoil, are not questions easy to answer. The awful wrath of the outraged moral instincts, which had deeper roots in the man of the West apparently than in him of the East, roused sombre and painful thoughts. The dark terror of God was spreading itself over the whole life of the Church. The deeper sense of sin was evidently not the result of a higher and fuller appreciation of the fulness and freedom of salvation, for a vast uncertainty prevailed on this very point. This uncertainty extended to the whole circumference of life, and the consciousness of it is present in the most minute details of life. "How can one," says Tertullian, "who is not sure of his salvation desire children?" He is haunted by the hopelessness of man's moral nature which is not

relieved by the greatness of God's mercy. The dark stain was so deep that no assurance seemed able to wipe it out. When we look more closely into his conception of sin, in spite of an apparent resemblance we see a very clear distinction between it and that of the Apostle. The enormous influence of the sensuous nature in men constituted as Tertullian—and these were also the inheritors of the traditions and the habits of life and thought of the Pagan World—the fiery pressure which this nature was for ever bringing to bear upon his life, led him to attach a weight and importance to these physical impulses which raised them to a level with the inner and more spiritual nature, and, in effect, reduced the latter to an equality with them. Now, however strong these brute instincts are, and however closely united in the life with the intelligible elements of character, they are still regarded as material and inferior, and therefore subordinate in the interpretation of human character, if the spiritual factor is of the very essence of human nature. Oppressed by the physical aspect of life and torn by its dark appeals, Tertullian so materialized sin—because, starting from his premises, human nature had become materialized—that it was easy to account for its origin, or at least for its derivation, simply by the law of heredity. Therefore Traducianism became the most natural and apparently easy solution of a problem which has even now been by no means exhausted of its difficulties. His consciousness of sin had its origin not, as with St.

Paul, in his Christian consciousness primarily, but rather in the sensuous impulses which were heaving with such volcanic energy in his troubled and warring spirit. This materialistic tendency led easily to a mode of thought which reduced sin to the category of conduct, and then, in turn, the sins which were viewed in such an external and detailed way were classified. By this classification they were supposed to gain their real value, but in reality the whole problem was made so thin and unsatisfactory by this proceeding, that no real assistance was obtained for the inner difficulties of the spiritual life. The Peccata Mortalia and the Peccata Venalia, what were they? However they are emphasized, and however great the energy with which they are insisted upon, we recognize that they are simply phenomena and details; the essential spiritual root from which all conduct derives its character has not been touched. The advocate has created a code, while man asks and needs a principle of life. It is the external manifestation of sin which is emphasized, and the acts of the body in their glaring hideousness are able to dwarf the mysterious and more awful inner rebellion of the soul from God.

The Peccata Mortalia were unforgivable in spite of the life of Christ, and the sense of Divine Forgiveness was so abridged that one does not wonder at the increasing gloom which spread so far and so wide, and which for so many centuries darkened the hopes of mankind and plunged so many souls into subtle attempts to win the one thing which man

needed, and which could not be reached unless at the same time the sense of forgiveness was also attained—that is, the certainty of God's love. This doubt is manifest in the prevailing conception of baptism, which reduced it to an 'opus operatum,' and which by means of some magical qualities inherent in it washed away all the sins which man had already committed. The later sins were not affected by it, and some provision must be made for them. This view omits, as is evident, any recognition of the permanent fact which lay behind the sacrament—that is, the forgiving disposition of God. While baptism was so exalted in the imaginations of men, and appeared to be endowed with such awful powers, it was in reality lessened by the new character bestowed upon it. In its origin it had been the assurance of the Father's love and the seal of man's filial relationship, in which fellowship and communion with God were the essence of the new history. It now became only a declaration of immunity from past offences, for which the great Judge would otherwise call man to account. The spiritual nature out of which it issued was evidently not affected by this sacrament, for the sins committed subsequent to its reception had still their legal aspect. The difficulty pressed hard upon them, but in the increasing enthusiasm for martyrdom was found a solution of this vital question. The qualities which inhered to the first baptism were now transferred to it as a second or blood baptism. In real value then, as coming last, martyrdom was logically and actually

greater than the original sacrament. The real problem was not met, for it is perfectly conceivable that in the sheer energy of despair a man may give his body to be burned and still cherish within the spirit which is not that of a child of God. The moral cowardice of the Gnostics, who asserted that the inner disposition was everything, and therefore that any concealments or subterfuges were permissible, undoubtedly excited an almost fanatical reaction. Even the most ignorant, while perhaps incapable of exposing the miserable sophism, could still feel the contemptible insincerity of the life out of which it sprang. The Gnostics, on their part, had undoubtedly in many cases a perfectly sane intention when they criticized the prevalent martyrolatry, but they were also carried away by the reaction until they became cravens. Thus the two extremes plunged into an abyss, from which they saw no means of escape.

This feeling for martyrdom was raised to a still greater height by the influence of Montanism, and the superficial value, as it may be called, was increased by the fact that the ethical significance of life was no longer to be ascertained by spiritual tests, nor did it flow out of an inner Christian consciousness, but was imposed by an external authority, the Paraclete, speaking through the Prophets. Thus all the forces at work tended to diminish the spiritual values and give a definite and concrete appreciation to that which cannot be reduced to quantitative measurement. The farther we go in an examination of this

subject, the more clearly are we convinced that we are moving in a far different atmosphere from that in which St. Paul developed his intense spiritual consciousness; and we can see furthermore that the same difference characterizes the other conceptions or spiritual emotions which lay at the root of Tertullian's ideal.

The legal interpretation of Christianity was growing stronger and stronger with each succeeding generation, and was also widening its scope until it included the whole territory of man's life. The earlier and contemporary writers had applied this conception to the intellectual statement of Christianity. Montanism, however, extended it to the daily conduct. The New Law is not less wide in its sweep than the Old, but more so. Between the Old and the New there is, in fact, no essential difference. It is true there is a distinction, but it is simply this: the New Law involves the mind and the disposition as well as the act. To this extent also it is more rigid and exacting than the Old Law.[1] The ceremonial law indeed is done away with, but the moral law remains, and this is the natural and original law by which the patriarchs were saved. Jesus Himself preached the New Law, and Tertullian, in his reply to Marcion, makes St. Paul the representative of this New Law. How entirely he misunderstood the Apostle, notwithstanding the great familiarity he shows with his writings, is clearly manifest in this particular point alone. It is true he uses St. Paul's

[1] Ritschl, *Entstehung der Altkat.*, S. 324.

expression of the Gospel freedom in opposition to the slavery of the Law, but the freedom which he means is not that of St. Paul, but rather freedom from the world—that is, abstinence, which is the result of a rigid obedience to the ascetic theory of a legally conceived religion.[1] The Law and the Gospel form no opposition, rather are they related to each other as the root to the plant, as the seed to the fruit, as childhood to youth: the later is only the earlier in another form, hence the Gospel, in distinction from the 'Prima lex Dei,'[2] from the 'Vetus lex,'[3] the 'Pristina lex,'[4] the 'Judaica lex,'[5] the 'Lex Moysi,'[6] is called the New Law or Our Law, Nova Lex or Nostra Lex.[7] Tertullian's whole conception of the relation between St. Paul and the other Apostles is singularly at variance with the explicit and positive statements of the Apostle himself. In regard to the fundamental question whence the Apostle received his doctrine, Tertullian boldly asserts that he received it from the other Apostles.[8] It is true he applies this only to the omission of the law from the Apostle's teaching, but an authority which was derivative in that respect could hardly be regarded as independent in other cases. In his explanation of St. Paul's journey to Jerusalem, Tertullian also gives

[1] Barth, "Tertullian's Auffassung des Apostels Paulus und seines Verhaltnisses zu den Uraposteln," *Jahrbücher für Protest. Theologie*, 1882, B. viii. S. 709.

[2] *De Pud.*, 5.

[3] *Ibid.*, 13.

[4] *De Monog.*, 7.

[5] *De Praes.*, 40.

[6] *Ibid.*, 42.

[7] *Ibid.*, 714.

[8] *Ad Mar.*, v. 2.

quite a different interpretation of the reasons which led him there, than that which the Apostle does. He says St. Paul went up because he wished to support his faith and preaching by the authority of his predecessors. His attitude towards the other Apostles was, according to Tertullian, one of dependence. He went up "ad patrocinium Petri ceterorumque Apostolorum."[1] With such a view of the relation of the Apostle, it is impossible that he should grasp the central idea of his conception of the relation of the Law to the Gospel.

It is hardly necessary to multiply quotations to show that in his conception of faith Tertullian had not gone any deeper than his predecessors, for the elements of the Pauline ideal form an organic whole, and a misconception of one leads on to a displacement or misinterpretation of the others. It is true that it is not just to attribute to the common use of language a scientific precision or intention, but underlying the most ordinary use of words always is found, only half concealed, the real meaning which is attached to them. Looked at in this way, it is no injustice to say that Tertullian does not seem to have entered into the circle of Christian ideas and experiences which are represented by the writings of St. Paul so far as they relate to life.

In his ideal of the perfect Christian, or of what constitutes Christian sonship, we have most complete statements, and the type presented is a most austere and mechanical one. Holiness, which we think of

[1] *Ad Mar.*, v. 3.

in connection with, or as the expression of, Christ's inner nature, was conventionalized and measured by certain ascetic practices. The highest ideal to which the follower of Christ could aspire was that of Virginity. This was also graded and classified, and to each stage a different value was attached. The first, and of course the highest, was Virginity from birth. The second was Virginity from baptism, the Christian motive being here first introduced. The third was the Virginity which followed the termination of a marriage which had been contracted before.

It is easy to see that Tertullian misunderstood the highest meaning of the Gospel, inasmuch as he regarded the perfect revelation of righteousness, which was originally made in Jesus Christ, to consist not in a more spiritual disposition, but in a sterner asceticism—not in an inward state, but an outward condition. The Scriptures were regarded as containing the legal code by which the life was to be governed, and what was not commanded or distinctly permitted was prohibited. Thus in the final elaboration and expansion of this principle a positive law was expected and demanded for the determination of every detail of life.

This codification of the Gospel led also to a distinct and clearly marked division in the ethical demands of the Church, and we find a morality of the common mass of Christians, and over and above that a higher standard which was accessible only to the few, and to seek which was a counsel of perfection.

This lower or secular life, so widely separated from the higher or religious life, divided the members of the Church into two unequal parts. More than that, this division left a distinctly false and injurious impression on the mind as to the end and aim of Christ's revelation. It introduced the idea that over and above the legal demands of the Gospel there was that which, if reached, would gain special favour from God—an idea which was to have a long history and lead to vast results. This was to Tertullian a most significant truth, and influenced most distinctly his interpretation of the Christian ideal. This appeal to personal achievement, the false emphasis laid on the individual act, gave an impulse to ascetic and legal theories of Christianity which were strengthened and expanded as the centuries rolled by, and in the end both religion and morality suffered from this fatal misconception. No man probably had more to do with shaping the subsequent development of the practical ideal of the Christian Church, at least in the West, than Tertullian. The later history rests upon the foundation which was laid in the period which we have been examining. All that followed, so far as it is characteristic or vital, is only the development of the conceptions already formed and the principles already stated. It is true that amid all the diversity, dissension, and confusion which were the result of an incomplete apprehension or misapprehension of the highest Christian ideal, there was still much which appeals to us yet, and much which points to

Christ as its origin. The explanation is that the Gospel is in the Person of Christ, and His presence is conditioned by nothing save the openness and willingness of the soul to receive Him.[1]

Tertullian himself is a striking illustration of this. In spite of all his exaggerations and wild and violent outbursts, all that is best in him points to Christ as its source: all that is harsh, unlovely, and bitter sprang out of his strong and abounding nature. His terrible earnestness, his burning indignation, had all their grace and value from the higher motive which mingled with them, but unfortunately did not subdue them.

Tertullian is one of those strange paradoxes of which life and not art furnish the most striking examples. No dramatic figure was ever so strangely impressive as he. He was the representative of ideas which were fast becoming forgotten, and yet he was the founder of the theology of the future. He was the chief figure of a narrow sect which was doomed to die, and yet he laid the foundations of a mode of thought which ruled the Western World for more than a thousand years. He was a schismatic, whose school was looked upon as the most dangerous to the integrity of the Catholic Church and Catholic institutions in his own age, and yet he became the great influence in the theological thought of North Africa until Augustine, and was

1 "Das Evangelium trat als Geschichte in die Welt, nicht als Dogma—wurde als Geschichte in der christliche Kirche deponirt." —Rothe, *Vor. ü. Kirchen*, B. ii. S. x.

the teacher whom the greatest ecclesiastic of his age read daily as his guide. He heaped scorn upon the weak and timid Christianity of the Church of his generation, and yet contributed more to shape the ideal and living influences of practical life for the future than any man in the Western Church. He was the most uncompromising of men, not because he was a logical theorist, but because of the passion and vehemence of his nature which scorned less than the highest. His insight was keen as that of a poet, and his sympathies as intense. A powerful, many-sided spirit constantly dwelling upon the actual facts of life, the real struggles of man simply as he stands, fronting the world. The awful pain of life itself, which is so silent and inarticulate in most, swept into expression like fiery waves which scorch and wither all the makeshifts and conventionalities behind which men try to conceal the hard and brutal face of the world. He has been called the Christian Rousseau, but there was less of vanity and egotism, and an immense amount more of vital masculine power, in Tertullian than in Rousseau.

When and where he died we know not. Perhaps in some lonely hour when the fierce battles of the past seemed like confused and futile shadows, when the storm of that long warfare had swept by, and all had sunk to silence like a tavern brawl; perhaps at the fiery stake or on the white sands of the arena, where, fearless and free, he stood hurling bitter taunts at the enemies who mocked at his calamity.

But however and when, we must feel that the truest expression of that dauntless soul, the fullest utterance of that mighty spirit, were the sad words with which he closes his *Tract on Prayer*, and which make him one with every erring child of God: "Only I pray that when you are asking, you be mindful likewise of Tertullian the sinner."

The long centuries rolled by, and on the wide arena of European history the ecclesiastical and legal definition of Christianity played its part, and unfolded all its elements both of good and evil. In the sixteenth century the Christian laymen of Europe called for a Gospel which should recognize the spiritual dignity, the moral earnestness, and the wide freedom of the first teachers of the Gospel. The result was the Protestant Revolution. In the nineteenth century this, although an enormous advance upon the preceding period, is seen to be inadequate. Not because the aim and the principles were so inadequately stated as that the reactionary forces and the fierce play of new elements which were asserting themselves with irresistible power checked the evolution of the new spirit and made Protestantism a case of Arrested Development. The century just ended has been characterized by the advance of one side of the Protestant movement—that is, the development of criticism both Biblical and Historical. The far vaster work of re-establishing the highest and most clearly defined Christian ideal for the actual man, and not the scholar or the theologian, remains still to be done.

It only remains now to bring this essay to a conclusion, and, in doing so, mention should be made of two of the theories which have been set forth with most energy and learning, to explain the mixed character of Christian history and the wide diversity of life and thought which appear in the long march of the centuries. Two men of remarkable genius in the first half of the nineteenth century felt the attraction of the problem and essayed to solve it. One was a German, the other an Englishman. The theory of Baur, which was based primarily not upon historical investigation and rigid scientific deduction, but upon a philosophical principle which was the keystone of the Hegelian philosophy of history, has been torn to tatters in his own land. The Tübingen school is a thing of the past, although the vast learning and splendid genius of its founder are still sources of knowledge and inspiration to every student of church history. His contention that history was but the reconciliation of two opposing antinomies in a higher unity, which again begets opposite principles, which are again reconciled, and thus gradually a higher stage of life and knowledge evolved, may be true, and no one questions the value of the principle as an aid in some difficult historical problems. But when he asserted that Catholic Christianity was the result and the resolution of the two opposing types of Pauline and Petrine Christianity, the contention could not be made good without such a violent distortion of

many facts, and a deliberate ignoring of many others, that in the end the theory fell to pieces the moment the material of which the structure was composed was more closely examined. The facts of history are always stronger than the theories of critics, but even facts are unintelligible unless a truly scientific principle of interpretation is applied to them. For a generation Baur and the Tübingen school were the storm centre of a movement which carried the knowledge and science of church history farther than they had ever advanced before in the same period of time. It produced a revolution in the spirit, no less than in the methods and principles which are recognized as legitimate in this field.

At the same time and in a different country was set forth a theory which was in its results in every respect the opposite of that of the German school, except intellectual acuteness and subtle and eloquent language. The theory which Newman held, and which he set forth with such amazing audacity in his *Essay on Development*, was neither scientific in its conception nor in its application. Yet to him might be applied the words which Baur applied to Möhler :—

> "Si Perga dextra
> Defendi possent, etiam hoc defensa fuissent."

Stripped of the glow and charm with which it was clothed in his fascinating pages, it seems, to the present writer at least, to amount to this only. That all the special and characteristic features which distinguish the Church of the second, third, fourth,

or the fifth, from the first century; all those which differentiate the Church of the twelfth, thirteenth, or fourteenth centuries from the Apostolic Age, were implicitly involved in the first. This is an easy, simple, and fascinating theory. But it is both too easy and too simple. It was a mere nose of wax in the dextrous fingers of the Oxford dreamer, which he twisted in whatever direction was necessary to justify the usages and theories of the Latin Church. The Gospel to him was not a living person or a vital principle, but a sacred deposit and a mechanical tradition, like the Hebrew Torah which Scribes and Rabbins were to unfold to a dull but obedient people. Whatever the authorized conservators of this tradition said it meant, it must mean. The Church as an institution was surrounded with such an hedge, that neither mistakes, errors, nor corruptions could enter without being immediately recognized, condemned, and expelled. But a theory of historical development which excludes the possibility of error not only in the practical scheme of life but within the circle of dogmatic orthodoxy, reduces that development to a blind evolution of hidden and unknown forces, by which man is swept along unconsciously and irresistibly. The mind and heart of man, which are the human elements which condition all development of history, find their chief and only function in obedience to a sacred and infallible authority which they can neither examine nor challenge.

But the scientists tell us that any theory of develop-

ment which does not recognize the part which environment, with its various elements and the incessant action and reaction of the forces within it, plays in the question of development, is fatally defective as a theory, however attractive as a speculation. To Newman the Church seemed like a cloud floating far above all contact with, or influence by, merely earthly conditions. Its appearance and movements are the result of hidden forces working from within. Its ever-changing form, the gleaming masses rising like snow-capped mountains, the threatening brow of the thunderstorm hanging like an avalanche above the heads of men, are but the result of the boundless living energy working on the formless masses of vapour creating and destroying moving forms of beauty and of awe.

Science, however, knows no such separate, individual self-development in the institutions of human society. The tree springs from the living germ, and is a development from the seed which no man has seen. But the tree is what it is as the result of the operation of a thousand different influences shaping its life and growth—the wind and the rain, the seasons and the soil, the configuration of the land, the altitude and latitude. These, it is true, do not create the living germ, but they modify most profoundly the growth and development of the tree. The final result is the combined effect of almost all the physical laws known to man, and as science advances it will undoubtedly reveal the operation of many others now unknown.

The inspiration of Christ's spirit is the living germ of the Church. All else is the result of causes whose origin, influence, and operation can be more or less distinctly traced without the Church as well as within, the general laws underlying all social evolution whether they are manifest in thought or in institutions. To try and explain Imperial or Latin Christianity without any regard for the historical conditions, without any basis in the ideas, tendencies, customs, and habits of the civilization of the past, is to leave the whole subject of historical science in the air. What the Church was in the age of Irenæus and Tertullian, what it became in the next generation and the next century, was the result of general historical laws, and not the explicating of truths implicit in the original revelation of the Gospel.

To assert that this varied expression, the different types of thought and life, the different ecclesiastical institutions, the forms and practices as well as the theories and habits of the Christian Church, were the evolution pure and simple of what was necessarily involved in the life and character of Jesus Christ, is simply inconceivable. The power of easy assimilation, which is the characteristic note of a powerful and growing organism, is one of the most striking features of these earliest centuries of Christian history, and the marvellous flexibility with which the Church adapted or rather absorbed the most vital and characteristic tendencies and intellectual habits of the times cannot be mistaken.

The theory of Development, which was set forth in Newman's Essay, was neither scientifically correct nor historically accurate in its application. The whole method of treatment is based upon an assumption; an *a priori* theory and *a priori* history has not been convincing since the Middle Ages.

On the other hand, to speak of these changes and additions as an apostacy is as incorrect as to assert that they are of divine origin and the notes of the perfect Church. In the actual life of the Church, in the character aimed at and the ideal set forth, and the means adopted for its realization—in these only can be found the true key for interpreting the life and meaning of an age or institution, and these form the only standard which the Christian student of history can regard as absolute.[1]

. . . . .

The traveller of to-day as he approaches Rome, filled with the memories of its great and awful past, sees rising before him, dim and misty, in the soft Italian air the mighty dome of St. Peter's. Whatever his Creed, whatever his prejudices, this silver cloud floating there high above the ancient city with its splendid traditions, its dark tragedies, and its world-wide sway, represents to him the history of the Christian Church for more than a thousand

1 "When Churchmanship assumes this degenerate form, Christianity is not indeed destroyed, nor does it cease to bring forth fruit; but the fruit is of an inferior and less characteristic quality, it is not the spirit and temper of sonship."—Gore, *Incarnation*, p. 2.

years. The spell of that great name has curbed the power of kings, and mighty nations have paid their homage and worship to him who held the keys of Peter and bade the world obey.

Far to the south, on the edge of the melancholy and desolate Campania, stands the lonely Church of 'ST. PAUL'S WITHOUT THE WALLS.' It would seem as if something stronger than ordinary historical motives had led to this choice of location. By an instinct deeper far than can be measured, the Apostle, whose power and fame cannot be denied, has been recognized 'without the Walls.' Which things, as he would say, are an allegory. Never in the vast structure of ecclesiastical Christianity has there been a full and free recognition of his great place. His ideal has not been the power which has shaped the organized expressions and efforts of the Christian Church. And yet from him all the great reformers of piety have drawn their inspiration. From him all the rebels against the stifling and narrow theories which have held the human soul in bondage and checked its eager aspirations, have gathered courage to fight the battles which have won the larger freedom and the wonderful hope which lifts the weakest up to mighty dreams and splendid daring. To him it is due more than to any other Christian teacher, that men have had glimpses into the heights and depths of Christian character. Standing there on the Asiatic shore, looking with burning eyes out over the unknown future, with his profound earnestness, his broad free spirit, his

boundless devotion to Christ, and the spiritual greatness of his ideal, he seems, in his solitude, the saddest, loneliest, and greatest figure, save One, in the long history of the Christian Church. A dim consciousness of the wide difference seems to lie in those pathetic words, "One born out of due time." Mankind seems striving for other aims than his. The organized Christianity seems confused and far away from him, with his clear vision and unfaltering heart. Will it ever see clearly, seek earnestly, and realize fully the ideal before him? God knows.

PRINTED BY NEILL AND CO., LTD., EDINBURGH.

THE LATEST BIBLE DICTIONARY

ENCYCLOPÆDIA BIBLICA

Edited by the Rev. T. K. CHEYNE, D.Litt., D.D.

AND

J. SUTHERLAND BLACK, M.A., LL.D.

Assisted by many Contributors in Great Britain, Europe, and America

---

THE VARIOUS STYLES IN WHICH THE WORK IS ISSUED

IN FOUR VOLS.

VOL. I.	VOL. II.	VOL. III.	VOL. IV.
A-D	**E-K**	**L-P**	**Q-Z**

EACH VOLUME MEASURES 11×8 INCHES, AND ABOUT 2 INCHES THICK.

Net Prices per Volume:

CLOTH	HALF LEATHER	FULL LEATHER	PAPER BOARDS
20s.	**25s.**	**30s.**	**20s.**

IN TWO VOLS.

THIS EDITION IS PRINTED ON THIN BIBLE PAPER WHICH PERMITS OF THE COMPLETE WORK BEING BOUND UP IN TWO HANDY VOLUMES, EACH MEASURING 11 × 8 AND ABOUT 1¾ INCH THICK.

	CLOTH	HALF LEATHER
Net Prices per Volume:	**40s.**	**50s.**

IN ONE VOL.

THIS EDITION IS PRINTED ON THIN BIBLE PAPER IDENTICAL WITH THE TWO-VOLUME EDITION, AND THE COMPLETE WORK MAKES ONE VOLUME, MEASURING 11×8 INCHES, AND ABOUT 3½ INCHES THICK.

	CLOTH	HALF LEATHER
Net Prices:	**80s.**	**100s.**

IN SIXTEEN PARTS

THIS EDITION IS THE SAME AS THE FOUR-VOLUME EDITION. EACH VOLUME IS DIVIDED INTO FOUR PARTS, EACH MEASURING 10¾×7¾, AND ABOUT ¾ INCH THICK.

Net Price of each Part: **5s.**

Cloth Covers for binding up the Parts in 4 Vols. may be obtained through any bookseller. Price **1s. 6d.** net each.

Volumes in all the above styles, and the Parts, may be obtained separately.

A Detailed Prospectus will be sent on Application to

A. & C. BLACK · SOHO SQUARE · LONDON · W.

Ready Autumn 1903

Demy 8vo, Cloth. Price 15s. net

THE LIFE OF JESUS

BY

Professor OTTO HOLTZMANN

TRANSLATED BY

J. T. BEALBY AND MAURICE A. CANNEY, B.A.

NOTE

The reception accorded to the German edition of O. Holtzmann's *Life of Jesus* is sufficient reason for the appearance of an English translation. It is not claiming too much to say that this remarkable work throws new light on the life of Jesus in every direction—on his character, parables, miracles, death, etc. Important as many of the earlier biographies were, and interesting as they still are, they are largely superseded by this *Life*, because the author avails himself of new studies and new methods of study. Of special value and interest are the concluding sections, in which the author gives an account of other great founders of Religions and, comparing them with Jesus, shows how he was greater than each and all of them.

PUBLISHED BY

ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK · SOHO SQUARE · LONDON · W.

REJECT

BT 25 .M4 1903

Means, Stewart, 1852-1940.

Saint Paul and the ante-
Nicene church

GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
00017309